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Volume 6 Issue 12

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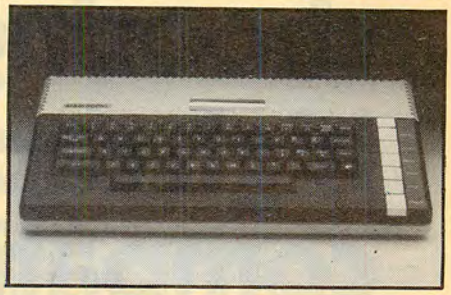

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Jack Schofield
Assistant Editor
Ian Stobie
Art Editor
Steve Miller
Production Editor
John Liebmann
Sub-editor
Sally Clark
Editorial Secretary
Sue Jordan
Consultants
Chris Bidmead
Peter Laurie
ADVERTISING 01-661 3612
Advertisement Manager
Ian Carter 01-661 3021
Advertisement executives
Mike Crimp 01-661 8425
Jacqui Ball 01-661 3633
Erica Vickers 01-661 3468
Advertisement Secretary
Janet Thorpe
Midlands office:
David Harvett 021-356 4838
Northern office:
Geoff Aikin 061-872 8861
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR
Chris Hipwell

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Would-be authors are welcome to send articles to the Editor but *PC* cannot undertake to return them. Payment is at £35 per published page. Submissions should be typed or computer-printed and should include a tape or disc of any program. Handwritten material is liable to delay and error.

Every effort is made to check articles and listings but *PC* cannot guarantee that programs will run and can accept no responsibility for any errors.

Next year...

CHRISTMAS IS COMING, the stocks are in the shops. All the manufacturers have their fingers crossed that people will be fighting over the last few of the millions of micros to be sold. And, frankly, so are we.

But after Christmas comes the New Year which, as everyone knows, is a time for resolutions. Anyone short of ideas is welcome to adopt one of the following.

We, the manufacturers, resolve not to announce our new micro, place lots of adverts in the press, and cash lots of cheques until we actually have the machine in production. OK, well, a prototype at least. Er, well, not before the design's finished. In principle, that is.

We, the games software houses, resolve not to rip off other people's games. Or at least, we promise to pay royalties if we do: after all, people are entitled to something for their skill, originality and sheer hard work. Of course, that doesn't apply to arcade games like Pacman, Donkey Kong, Missile Command, Space Invaders. That's not really stealing. Anyway we write our own code. Well, most of it.

We, the pirates, resolve not to copy any more commercial software and sell it. Of course we'll still need to crack the protection schemes to take copies for back-up purposes — and one or two for a few mates at the club. You can't stop people from giving software away, and if people want to give you something in return, well, it's embarrassing to refuse. It's ungrateful. Anyway, don't tell us you've never photocopied an article from a magazine or taped a record. The top ten Spectrum games? Only a tenner.

We, the business software houses, resolve to debug software fully before we sell it, or at least, provide free or cheap upgrades to plug gaping holes in the specification — as long as the customers' demands are feasible. Obviously that doesn't cover providing a £ sign on American systems costing under about £5,000. And they can't expect anything fancy like a package that prints fractions. Who uses fractions in this day and age? Be reasonable!

We, the advertising agencies, resolve to tell the truth, or at least not exaggerate too much. Perhaps saying a push-button keyboard is "professional" or that a ZX Sinclair could run a power station is going just a touch too far, but there has to be some poetic licence. After all, a micro can do almost anything if you give it the right instructions, and Basic is practically plain English. Even a child can use it. Anyway, we're not experts. We have to believe what the manufacturers tell us, really.

We, the publishing corporations, resolve not to launch any more micro magazines, as there are too many already. Though actually, there isn't a magazine for Electron users, so we might make an exception there. Plus we have to do a Spectrum magazine, but this one will be really different. It will be on tape, for a start, and come with a free partwork, and a pop record — possibly a video too. How does *Personal Computer Tapes* sound? And why stop at the Spectrum? Anyway, if we don't launch them someone else will.

We, the magazine editors, resolve to try and get most of the articles right, for a change. Of course we can only skim through the text because it would take too long to run the programs, even if we had the machines available. Well, it's not a problem really. Readers like programs to have a few bugs because then it's a challenge to make them work. Anyway, no one follows listings exactly. It's like cookery recipes, where you take the bits you want and see what you can make out of them. Talking of food, if you're buying lunch the pubs will be open in five minutes.

We, the readers, resolve to buy *Practical Computing* every month because it is, after all, the only worthwhile magazine. Well, *PCW* is good too. Then there's the club's newsletter, the user group magazine and the manufacturer's magazine — and one or two that come free with the job. Of course you have to keep an eye on the others. Some of them have good articles every few months or so, if only there was time to read them. Did you see that piece about how a ZX-81 is really better than an IBM PC? Or that one where the cleaning lady did the bench tests? Amazing.

5 Years ago...

Our Nascom-1 was a week late being delivered. Not a criticism, but more a worry as our deadlines seem earlier each month. It is not surprising, though, that the machine was late, as it reflects the phenomenal success story of the Nascom-1.

Very fortunately for us the review kit delivered was not a kit, but a ready-built and working machine, because the Nascom-1 is not a trivial kit to assemble.

That is its major disadvantage, as it arrives as a box of parts, some 203 components for the CPU board, which ammounts to approximately 1,310 solder points in construction. On a board roughly the size of this page with that number of components — 55 are integrated circuits — the layout packing is very tight and the printed circuit tracks very thin. The construction notes supplied suggests a total of 20 hours required for construction; I think they are optimistic.

Remember, part of the price the purchaser pays is the tedious work of putting together the kit. Obviously, the kit is not insuperably difficult as there are many satisfied customers but it needs careful and patient construction.

Practical Computing Volume 2 Issue 1.

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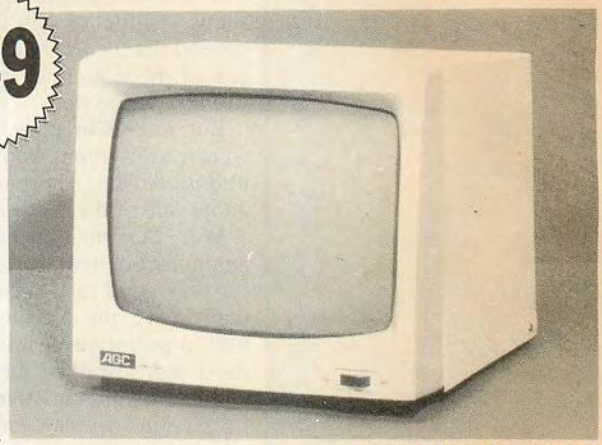

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Quids in — for whom?

HAS NO ONE else noticed the inability of WordStar to produce a £ sign on the IBM printer? I understand that if you use a standard Epson everything is alright but the changes made by IBM mean that the ASCII value of the £ sign is too high and is trapped by WordStar.

It's a bit of a cheek that after spending some £4,500 you cannot even print your own national monetary symbol. Like many others I bought the IBM package under the impression that the software designed for the IBM would be compatible with it. It should be possible for Micropro to produce a patch which overcomes the problem — I suppose it all depends on how much they value U.K. custom.

John Lewis,
Oxford.

Easy as pi

HAD MR MEHEW reread my letters of March and August he would not have wasted time and effort by barking, however eloquently, up the wrong tree in his letters of May and October.

My first letter had the single aim of correcting the statement made by another contributor in an earlier issue that, if you had a 10-digit display on your computer, then 22/7 gave you π to 10 significant digits. For the possible interest, not use, of readers I then wrote: "*If* you *really* want a *rational fraction* that approximates π to 10 digits, use 3,235,853 / 1,030,004." I italicise the words that have been overlooked.

I fail to see how anyone, even with the worst will in the world, could interpret this as meaning that I, or anyone else, would use this fraction other than under considerable duress. Inverse tangents, not being rational fractions, are clearly irrelevant here, though ingenious combinations of inverse tangents are the usual means of calculating π to many digits. However, calculating $\pi/4$ from arctan(1) is a textbook example of inefficient computation. Even on the Apple it takes some seconds to produce nine-digit accuracy in this way.

Of course, when operating an Apple the keystrokes

4*ATN(1)

invoke π quite quickly, but only because they do not initiate any actual calculation of π. Some operations involve a value of $\pi/2$ stored as a five-byte constant in locations −3997 through −3993.

So neither the Apple nor, indeed, the Apple Corporation actually calculate π. Presumably they looked it up in some reliable source. The difference between calculation, look-up of something already calculated, and when to use one and when the other, are important problems. One should keep one's mind clear about them.

Mr Mehew asks whether anyone knows the exact value of π. It has no finite exact value, being a transcendental number. However many digits you compute, there are always more to be computed, and you cannot find out what digit is in a particular place without first computing all the digits that precede it. The literature about π and its calculation is vast, but the essentials are readily accessible in public libraries. I'm sure Mr Mehew would enjoy them.

R A Fairthorne,
Farnborough,
Hampshire.

IN HIS continued advocacy of

4*ATN(1)

as an equivalent to π S Mehew says "it ... will evaluate to as many places as the computer can handle". True: but there is no guarantee that they will be correct, for ATN is worked out from a complicated polynomial approximation to the ATN function, and such approximations often result in slight errors.

A check can be made by printing out the values of the bytes of the internal floating-point representation of ATN(1). The mantissa bytes should agree with the sequence:
201,15,218,162,33,104,194,52,
196, 198, ...
which were worked out from πcorrect to 40 decimal places. These bytes may be inspected by Peeking, if you know where they are. Otherwise my short program will print them out. N should be one more than the number of mantissa bytes that your computer uses. Thus for the ZX-81, which uses four-byte mantissas, N = 5 gives

210,15,218,162,0

confirming that

ATN(1) = π/4

correct to the number of bytes used.

If ATN(1) is in error, one of the series of rational approximations to π is safe: 104,348/33,215 has an error of about 3×10^{-10} and will give the correct value for a four-byte mantissa: 80,143,857 / 25,510,582 has an error of about 6×10^{-16} and will give the correct value for a six-byte mantissa.

W E Thomson,
Aldeburgh,
Suffolk.

```
LET Q = ATN(1)
FOR I = 1 TO N
LET Q = 256*Q
LET B = INT(Q)
PRINT B
LET Q = Q - B
NEXT I
```

Dissatisfied customer...

EVERYONE must now have heard about the infamous "28-day delivery" quoted by Sinclair and others, but may not realise the depths to which the mail-order situation has recently fallen. I refer in particular to the Oric 1 and its software. Having now managed to sort out the problems with the 16K Oric, Oric Products International and its software house, Tansoft, now seem to have put all their efforts into plumbing new depths of bad service with the software packages Oric Forth and Oricmon.

These programs were advertised in the magazine early in June, quoting the usual "delivery within 28 days". I sent off my order to Tansoft, for the Forth and Monitor packages, on June 11. About two weeks later a confirmation of the order was received and stated that delivery would be within 28 days of the date of this confirmation.

Five weeks later still, having received nothing and being unable to phone Tansoft during the day, I wrote asking what had happened. A further week elapsed before the unexpected arrival of Oric Forth. There was no covering letter to explain what had happened to Oricmon, but at least I could now use Forth.

The documentation was well down to the very low standard set by the original Oric Programming Manual. The label on the cassette itself said that the program was recorded at Fast speed. After half an hour of unsuccessfully trying different playback levels I changed to Slow speed and obtained a good load first time. The contents page of the manual says that loading instructions were to be found on pages 1 and 2. My manual began at page 3, pages 15/16 being considered so important that Tansoft had included them twice.

The manual begins as though assuming no knowledge on the part of the user, but quickly becomes so confused and disorganised that beginners are soon on their own. Now, some 11 weeks after my first order and four weeks after receiving Forth, I am very pleased with the software, but making sense of the manual was very hard work.
Oricmon, but at lease I could now use Forth.
labelled correctly and loaded first time at Fast speed. It also seems to work, but the covering letter began "Please find enclosed your Oricmon tape.

(continued on next page)

Our Feedback columns offer readers the opportunity of bringing their computing experience and problems to the attention of others, as well as to seek our advice or to make suggestions, which we are always happy to receive. Make sure you use Feedback — it is your chance to keep in touch.

(continued on previous page)

The manual will be sent on to you in about four weeks when we receive it from the printers . . ." so I cannot be sure.

I shall avoid Tansoft like the plague in future. Why should users pay top prices for software and then get this pathetic service? Why can Tansoft not answer enquiries about non-delivery of goods? Why is there no department to answer the inevitable technical queries brought about by the very poor documentation? Why does "delivery within 28 days" mean delivery in about 15 weeks, if you're lucky?

Perhaps Tansoft might bother to answer you.

A P Hill,
Braunton,
Devon.

...and a happy one

YOUR CORRESPONDENCE columns are full of complaints about retailers of computing equipment. There are, however, dealers who offer a service that goes way beyond even excellence.

I purchased a BBC Micro hoping that I would be able to use it for professional purposes. After a short while it became apparent that I needed a random-access filing system. This was beyond my very limited capabilities so I responded to an advertisement for a book on the subject with demo disc from The Computer Room in Newthorpe. One of the programs on the disc was almost what I needed, but trying to modify it produced only system crashes.

However, a letter to the author, to my astonishment — I have had previous experience of major retailers — produced by return of post a most helpful reply. Within a week I had been sent a personalised system on two discs which fulfils all my needs. No payment was asked for.

I have had no previous connection with Mr Morris of The Computer Room. I might add that the failure was in no way due to the book — but to my Basic ignorance. My faith in the computer industry is almost restored.

J J Hamblin,
Westcliff-on-Sea,
Essex.

Sad accident

MANY THANKS for including Husky in the excellent British Micro supplement to the October issue. Unfortunately, the photograph you published fails to show Husky to the best advantage. It is a shot of a unit that had previously been run over by a fork-lift truck during shipment, and had been sent to you with an associated press release describing this unfortunate incident.

While it is remarkable how little damage the Husky suffered in this event, the LCD screen is not normally supplied in the smashed form illustrated in your article.

David Viewing,
DVW Microelectronics,
Coventry.

Unimpressed

IF ONLY the world were full of customers like H J Challen I'd give up my job and move into software straight away.

If one follows his example of marketing disc-drive manuals, I could produce a computer and justifiably provide it with no documentation. All I'd have to do is manufacture a TV set — in very limited quantities, like the Acorn 80-track disc drives — and give the computer documentation with that.

The Acorn DFS is only supplied by Acorn. Having paid £98 for a chip I expect some docmentation telling me what it does. By all means insist that the disc-drive manufacturer provides a manual telling you how to operate the disc drives but not, for pity's sake, a software product he has not attempted to sell to a customer. None of the manufacturers selling alternative DFS systems insist you buy a disc drive from them to find out what the ROM chip you have paid for does.

Mr Challen also likes the way the Forth book and cassette are separately charged items. He would presumably be happy to have the added flexibility of receiving the language cassette one month, and the accompanying docmentation over six months later. He'd be even happier on receipt of his documentation to find that his cassette is now being made available in disc and ROM format for little extra cost.

Finally, Mr Challen thinks it admirable that Acorn charges him £9.95 for 256 bytes of code that enable him to use his £60 word processor properly.

Ian Smith,
Alkhobar,
Saudi Arabia.

Factorials.

```
  10 PRINT AT 2,10;"FACTORIALS"
  20 PRINT AT 4,1;"N","FACTORIAL
 N"
  30 LET L=LN 1000
  40 INPUT N
  50 LET E=0
  60 IF N=0 THEN LET NF2=1
  70 IF N=0 THEN GOTO 140
  80 IF N<0 OR N<>INT N THEN GOT
O 40
  90 LET NF1=((1/(N+12))+(N+(LN
N-1)))+LN (SQR (2*PI*N))
 100 LET E=INT (NF1/L)
 110 LET NF1=NF1-(E*L)
 120 LET E=3*E
 130 LET NF2=EXP NF1
 140 PRINT N,NF2,,"E+";E
 150 GOTO 40
 160 SAVE "SUPER FACTORIAL"
 170 FAST
 180 GOTO 10
```

Factorials

THE COMMENT by Owen Bishop concerning the limitations imposed on the calculation of factorials by microcomputers are appropriate only when using the direct method shown in his examples. Lifting these limitations to the speed of computation and size of numbers factorialized is not difficult, as demonstrated in my program.

The program uses Jewett's approximation rather than the more often cited Stirling's method and an exponent-stripping routine. Lines 10 to 80 print the heading, initialise the variables and perform sanity checks. Line 90 computes LN N!, while lines 100 and 110 strip as many LN 1000 as possible from LN N! putting the answer in standard engineering notation. Line 120 adjusts the exponent. Line 130 takes the EXP of LN N! less all possible integral multiples of LN 1000.

The error factor using Jewett's approximation is always less than the magnitude of N and so rapidly becomes insignificant.

Marshall P Brown,
Dhahran,
Saudi Arabia.

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Hardware - 32K RAM on the MTX500, 64K on the MTX512.

The MTX500 has 32K of user RAM as standard (64K on the 512), expandable to 512K plus 16K of video RAM, controlled by a separate Video Processor. Sixteen colours, 40 column text, 256 x 192 high resolution graphics with all sixteen colours available, and 32 easily moveable user defined graphics characters (Sprites) combine to make effective screen displays quick and simple to achieve. Standard outputs are centronics printer port, two joystick ports, an uncommitted I/O port, 2400 Baud Cassette port, separate TV and Video Monitor ports, 4 channel sound with hifi output plus a dedicated cartridge port. Other standard features include the Z80A processor running at 4MHz, real time clock, full moving key keyboard with 79 keys including eight 2-function keys and separate numeric pad.

Software

The MTX's 24K ROM contains several languages and routines which enable the novice or the experienced programmer to make full use of the machine. Standard languages are MTX BASIC, MTX LOGO commands, NODDY. ROM routines include an ASSSEMBLER/DISASSEMBLER with screen display of the Z80 CPU registers, memory and program,which can be manipulated from the keyboard. Machine code programs can be stepped through one instruction at a time, and easily called from within BASIC programs. A further feature is the Virtual Screen facility which enables the programmer to split the screen into a maximum of eight sections to work independently whilst maintaining all full screen facilities. Pascal is available as an add-on ROM pack.

The Disc Based Computers from Memotech

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5 1/4" Qume drive, 500K unformatted, 347K formatted,
5 1/4" Winchester which may be 5, 10, or 20 Mb

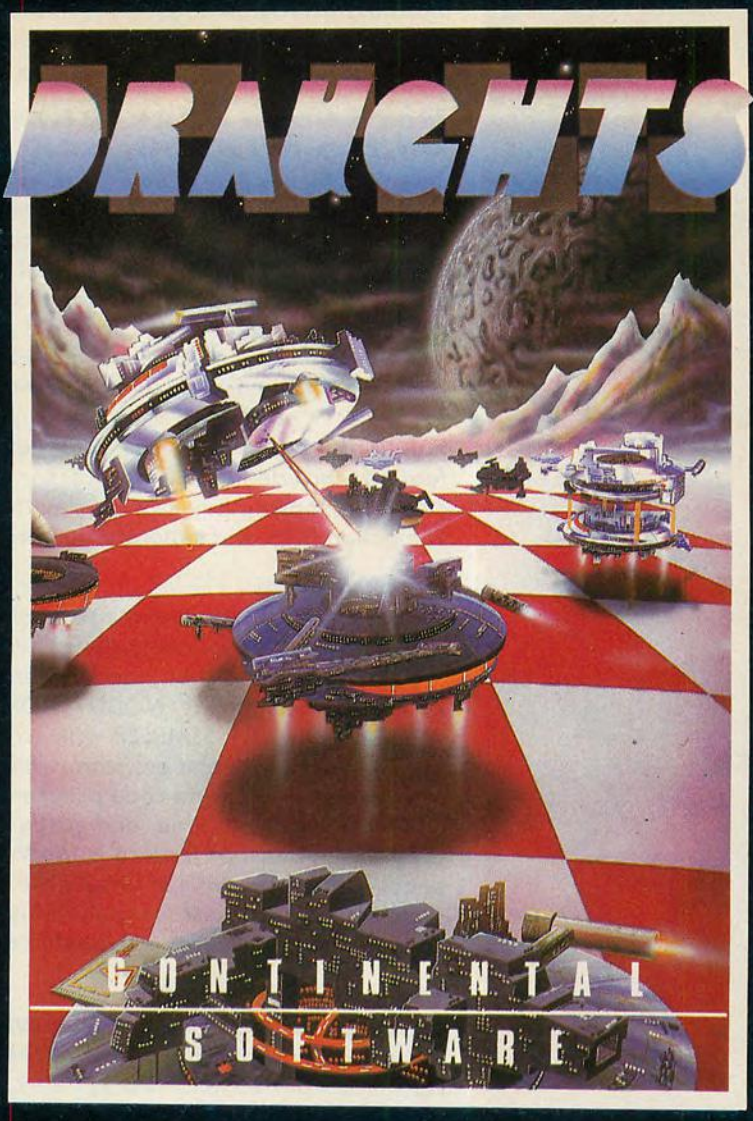
All Memotech products are designed and manufactured in Oxfordshire, England

CP/M is a trademark of Digital Research Inc.

MEMOTECH
MTX
SERIES

Circle No. 104

CONTINENTAL SOFTWARE



We're not just playing games...

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A fast maze chase with untold perils and hazards.

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Get the toad back to his nest – but don't get run over or drown on the way.

SUPER MINEFIELD
You may have seen other Minefield games but ours has tanks that lay invisible mines, and spiders that are *very* tricky to avoid.

CONTINENTAL INVADERS
Classic arcade action, with all the features that make this game so popular.

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Eliminate submarines with a combination of radar screen and sonar, very realistic.

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Take off, navigate and land your high powered light aircraft. All the features of true flight.

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Sophisticated and powerful, the professional spreadsheet program.

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All necessary features are included to give a powerful business tool.

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Sales and Purchase Ledgers, stock control, payroll – the complete business system.

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Speaks for itself, and helps you achieve deadlines efficiently and effectively.

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CHESS, BACKGAMMON, OTHELLO, DRAUGHTS.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS
MATHS 1 PHYSICS 1
The first two programs in a series of specially written software designed to teach at the pace and level best suited to the user.

Software for the MTX SERIES

CONTINENTAL SOFTWARE UNIT 24 STATION LANE WITNEY

● Circle No. 105

Arab RAM for ZX-81

BASIC PROGRAMMING in Arabic is now possible using the Sinclair ZX-81. A Saudi Arabian company has produced an add-on appropriately called Arab RAM, which plugs into the back of the computer. It generates an Arabic character set, and text is displayed on the screen from left to right. Arab RAM also gives the Basic a full set of Arabic keywords.

Keyboard overlays and a supplementary manual written in Arabic are also provided.

The computer can still be used for programming in the English language when the user choses to.

Further details from Autoram, PO Box 147, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Telephone: Saudi Arabia (010 966) 660 4212.

Dragon/ Tandy converter

IF DRAGON CRUNCHER does what is claimed for it the number of good programs available to Dragon owners has been vastly increased at a stroke. Dragon Cruncher converts Tandy Color Computer programs to run on the Dragon. It also works the other way, which will interest Tandy Co-Co owners.

No programming knowledge is required to use Dragon Cruncher. At the moment it can only handle Basic programs. The price if £7.95, including post and packing.

Contact Elkan Electronics, Freepost, 11 Bury New Road, Prestwich, Manchester M26 6LZ. Telephone 061-798 7613.

Lisa ledgers

A COMBINED ledger system with automatic posting to sales, purchase and nominal ledgers is now available for the Apple Lisa. Sunaccount costs £1,250. Financial reports from the package can be further manipulated by Lisacalc and Lisawrite.

Contact Systems Union Ltd, 34 Delancey Street, London NW1 7NH. Telephone: 01-485 2594.

Down the sewer

PORTABLE COMPUTERS don't get soggy, which gives them an advantage over pencil and paper down a sewer. Two water authorities, Thames and Southern, are using the Husky battery-powered portable to record defects found during sewer inspection. Specialised software for the task was written for them by Structural Dynamics of Southampton.

The Husky is ideal for the purpose as it is waterproof and designed to operate in harsh environments. A new version is available to meet the safety requirements of industries where inflammable or explosive atmospheres are likely to be encountered.

For details contact DVW Microelectronics, PO Box 135, 345 Foleshill Road, Coventry CV6 5RW. Telephone: (0203) 668181.

16-bit Cardbox-Plus

CARDBOX-PLUS is one of the best selling record-keeping programs for eight-bit CP/M machines. It can now be obtained for the Sirius, Wang and IBM PCs. Cardbox-Plus is simple to use because it emulates a card index, with individual records represented by a screenful of information. Record size is limited to 2,340 characters in the 16-bit version.

Cardbox-Plus costs £300. A multi-user version with record-level locking is also now available for MP/M and Turbodos systems. Details from Business Simulations Ltd, Scriventon House, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0TU. Telephone: Langton (0892) 3105.

Software Index

YET ANOTHER computer magazine will be on the newsstands from December. *Software Index* takes the form of a directory of available software for eight popular home micros including the BBC, Commodore 64 and Spectrum.

It is a remote cousin of *Practical Computing* as it is published by IPC Magazines, a rival arm of the giant Reed publishing empire. *Software Index* will be published quarterly and costs £1.50.

Intelligent disassembler

MDIS is an intelligent disassembler for Z-80 and 8080 CP/M machines. It lets you take apart machine-code programs for examination or modification.

MDIS goes beyond simple disassemblers and provides automatic labelling in addition to Z-80 or 8080 mnemonics. Data areas are reported in defined-byte form with an ASCII printout alongside.

MDIS output can be to screen, printer or disc, and it can be edited for reassembly by a variety of assemblers including Microsoft's common M-80 assembler.

MDIS costs £50 and is available in a variety of CP/M disc formats from Henry's, 404-406 Edgware Road, London W2 1ED. Telephone: 01-402 6822.

Stocking fillers

MOST OF the following programs should be available from High Street shops but a contact phone number or address of the publisher is provided.

- In **Lone Raider** for the Atari you enter and destroy an alien nuclear power station. It is cassette based and costs £14.99. Published by Atari. Telephone: Slough 33344.
- **Franklin's Tomb** is one of the best Adventure games. Already running on the Dragon and Oric micros, it is now also available for the BBC machine. It costs £9.95. Published by Salamander Software. Telephone: Brighton (0273) 771942.
- **The Forest** simulates the terrain seen by a runner competing in an orienteering event. The scene changes as you run through the landscape. The program, which runs on the 48K Spectrum, comes with a four-colour map prepared to orienteering conventions and a 32-page book of instructions. It costs £9.95. Contact Phipps Associates, 172 Kingston Road, Ewell, Surrey KT19 0SD. Telephone: 01-393 0283
- The latest program for home use is quite seriously called **What's to Eat**. It is a database of meals, with the computer displaying lists of ingredients and producing a shopping list. It runs on the BBC Model B and costs £9.95, or £12.95 on disc. Contact Shumwari Associates, 12 Marlin Court, Marlow, Buckinghamshire SL7 2AJ. Telephone: (062 84) 5751.
- Domesticated people may also be interested in **Cut Your Heating Bills**, a program for the 48K Spectrum. It aims to help you compare savings from double glazing, wall, floor or roof insulation, changing fuel or altering your thermostat settings. It costs £7.95 including post and packing from Brane Software, Myrtle Grove, Brane, Sancreed, Penzance, Cornwall TR20 8RE. Telephone: (073) 672 562.

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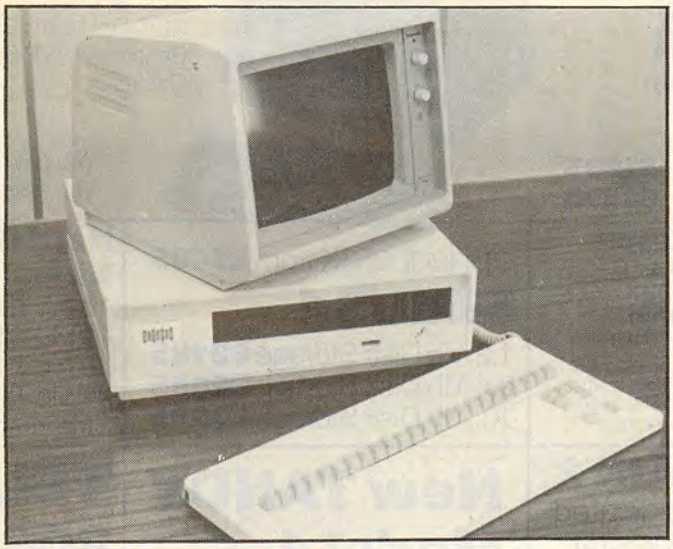
● **Circle No. 106**

Octopus



AFTER WORKING methodically from M-1 to M-4, LSI has broken with tradition by giving the M-5 a name: Octopus. It is styled differently from the M-4, in being a three-piece desk-top micro. Internally, like the M-4 it offers an 8088 plus a Z-80 for both eight-bit and 16-bit processing with most popular operating systems. The construction is, however, radically different.

The neat main board has a single expansion slot near the back. Other boards can be piggybacked on to it to provide an extra five RS-232C ports, more RAM, an Arcnet-style network connection, etc. In the future, extra processors might be added. Each additional board has both an input socket and an output socket, so they simply slot one on top of another, building up a bus without the need for a card cage. The style is rather like the Memotech accessories for the ZX-81.

The result is a desk-top micro which can be sold at a competitive price against the IBM PC and Sirius 1, but which can also handle, without modification, two more terminals running under M/PM-II. With the extra boards, another four or five terminals could be added, or several small systems networked together. For extra storage, 8in. floppy and hard-disc drives can also be added. The result is a minicomputer-like system like, for example, the ICL PC. Did I hear anyone say "future proof"?

The Octopus offers a choice of keyboards, including LSI's word-processing keyboard with ample function keys, and an IBM PC-type keyboard from Keytronic. There is a choice of monochrome or colour monitors, as the standard machine includes colour circuitry. It also has a built-in PAL UHF output, so if you lug the machine home you can plug it into your TV.

Octopus prices start at £1,530 + VAT for a single-drive system with keyboard but without monitor. A twin-floppy system with a screen and a complete integrated business package called Axis costs £2,090 plus VAT. The Octosoft software package brings word processing, mailmerge, spreadsheet and database; it costs £295 extra.

Octopus is manufactured by LSI, which is part of CPU computers, a company quoted on the Unlisted Securities Market. In the year to June 1983, this 10-year-old company showed turnover doubled from £9.6million to £19.2million. LSI sales were £3.5million.

Contact LSI Computers, Copse Road, St Johns, Woking, Surrey GU21 1SX. Telephone: (04862) 23411.

MOS Supermicro

THE MOS SUPERMICRO is a new British business computer designed and produced by MOS International of Winchester. It uses a Z-80A running at 4MHz, has 64K of RAM, and a good range of interfaces including a Mosnet port for networking. Apparently the Supermicro has been on sale in Australia, Africa and Europe for the last year. Now the British are to be offered the chance to buy it from TKT Computers.

Contact TKT Computers, Rood End Road, Oldbury, Warley, West Midlands.

Lucas LX

MANY READERS of this magazine will remember building their first Nascom from a kit. Since the takeover by Lucas, however, the Nascom 3 has been taken firmly into the office/small business area of the market.

Now Lucas Microcomputers has launched the new LX micro running CP/M 2.2 or, optionally, NasSys and NasDos. The LX has a Z-80A running at 4MHz, 64K of RAM, an 8K Basic in ROM and graphics resolution of 784 by 256 pixels. Up to 4,193 shades are available to colour graphics. The LX can drive both colour and monochrome monitors at the same time, and a UHF output is included to drive a TV, though a 12in. moniotr is supplied as standard. Prices are from £1,795 plus VAT.

Contact Lucas Microcomputers, Lucas Logic Ltd, Welton Road, Wedgnock Industrial Estate, Warwick CV34 5PZ. Telephone: (0926) 497733 and 400004.

Ferranti's Advance

THE ADVANCE 86, a £400 IBM PC-compatible small micro, caused a stir when it was previewed in our October issue. The Advance uses Ferranti ULAs, and now a deal has been signed with Ferranti to produce the micro at its Derker Street factory in Oldham.

Contact Ferranti Computer Systems, Bird Hall Lane, Cheadle Heath, Stockport. Telephone: 061-428 0771. Advance can be contacted direct at 01-609 0061.

Philips Portable

THE WELL KNOWN Dutch multinational has leapt into the transportable computer market with the new P-2000C, which is based on the standard P-2000 office model.

It features a Z-80A, 64K of RAM, 32K of separate video RAM, a 9in. screen and two 5.25in. floppy discs with up to 640K of storage each. The screen resolution is excellent at 512 by 512 pixels. Some unnamed software, including a word-processing package and a spreadsheet, will be bundled with the machine.

This trade information comes from Austria but hardy souls might try Philips in the U.K.

Telephone: (0206) 575115. Or contact Philips Austria, MAG Personal Computers, Trieestestrasse 64, A-1100 Vienna, Austria. Telephone: 43-222-64 55 21/584.

Wang

WANG HAS introduced the Local Interconnect option which enables Wang PCs to be networked, or used as a work station in an OIS — Office Information System — VS, IIS/VS or other Wang system based on a mini or 32-bit super-minicomputer.

New software for the Wang

(continued on page 21)

LONDON COMPUTER CENTRE

NEC ADVANCED PERSONAL COMPUTER

16 bit 8086 128K Ram
2.4Mb Disk Storage
CP/M86 – MS DOS
Green Screen **£1985**
Colour Display **£2595**

LCC SPECIAL BUNDLE.

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NEC Dot Matrix Printer	R.R.P. £ 395
Benchmark WP Software	R.R.P. £ 311
Cables	R.R.P. £ 30
	£2721
you pay	£1985
you save	£ 736

EPSON QX 10 192K RAM £1735
Up gradable to 256K multi fronts zoom graphics

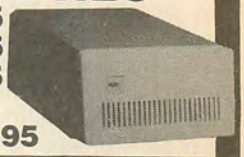
apricot 256K from **£1495**

SIRIUS 1

1.2 Mb Disk Storage **£2195**
2.4 Mb Disk Storage **£2695**
10. Mb Disk Storage **£3995**

Hard Disk for IBM PC, Sirius, QX10 NEC

10 Mb **£1545**
15 Mb **£1695**
20 Mb **£1995**
20 Mb Tape Streamer **£1495**



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CP/M 3.0* Optional extra
64K-128K RAM
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the Multi User Computer System

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Portable with built-in printer
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NEC PC 8201 16K RAM EXPANDABLE to 96K

Lap Portable with 8 built in programmes, Word Processor, Investment Portfolio, Loan Evaluator, Appointment/Schedule, Bar Code Reader, Calculator, Tank & Snake Game, Music Generator.
Large 40 x 8 LCD Display
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full 80 x 24 display
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Fast and reliable
8K buffer
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* Compact, lightweight, portable
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Bi directional Adler daisywheels
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24 Needles - high speed drafts 190 CPS Letter Perfect Printing 100 CPS Addressable Pin Graphics **£1130** Options: Tractor **£87:** Sheet feeder **£520**

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Diablo 620 compatible
Japanese reliability
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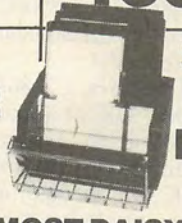
3 TRAY AUTO SHEET FEEDER

For originals, copies and envelopes.
£695



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80 CPS Friction and Tractor inc. interface cable and paper **£250**

SUITABLE FOR MOST DAISY PRINTERS

All prices are Exclusive of VAT and Delivery. Dealer Enquiries invited on all Products.
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Demonstrations on all models.

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● Circle No. 160

CHOOSING A HOME MICRO

WARNING

Choosing a home micro can be a daunting task to the newcomer, and with an ever increasing number of micros emerging on the market, even up-grading, say, from a ZX81 can be a risky and expensive exercise if the wrong decision is made. It is important to look at the real facts and specifications, and check exactly what you get for your money before choosing your micro-computer system.

THE PITFALLS

"DON'T LET THE ADD ONS ADD UP"

A number of large companies are offering packages that seem to be good value and low cost.
These offers usually have a hidden sting inasmuch as the essential accessories such as connection leads, peripherals and software often carry very high cost premiums.
e.g. software for low cost hardware usually costs between £29 and £49 for a ROM cartridge!!

CHECK THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT.

Raw materials are now an area where corners can be cut, and shoddy workmanship during 'building' can effect the 'up-time' of your unit.
Areas to watch out for are unreliable edge connectors, corrosion and poor quality P.C.B.s. Low quality components and bad design will seriously effect the reliability of the end product, and can lead to false economy.

DON'T BUY A GAMES MACHINE

Unless you want just games and nothing else! With a games computer you are limited.
Some computers, however, have the advantage of both games facility plus the whole world of computing to explore, as your interest and skills develop. A real computer system will allow you to expand your knowledge of the Hi-Technology world, and help earn its keep with its added uses in the field of education, communication and home business use.

SOFTWARE

Make sure the system you choose has a growing library of support software, to enable you to realize the full potential of your machine.

KEY POINTS TO LOOK FOR

● High Resolution Colour

In general most home computers have a poor graphics resolution (or detail). Check on the vertical and horizontal resolution in graphic mode and multiply the two numbers together. If the result is less than 35,000, then the graphics can hardly be considered high resolution.
Without high resolution graphics displays such as those used in games tend to be "Chunky" in appearance.

● High Quality Sound

Some computers claim to provide a sound channel when in reality all that can be found inside the computer is a small buzzer controlled by electronic pulses. At the very least a sound facility should provide more than one channel and a raise channel as well (for gun shot effects in games for example). The best systems also provide envelope control of the sound channels to produce very sophisticated effects; very important for generating music. Also look for the ability to connect to external amplifiers.

● Keyboard

For accurate entry of programs and data into a computer it is important that the keyboard has a good tactile feel in operation. Coupled with acoustic feedback the user is fully aware when the computer has accepted his/her actions. Also of importance in a keyboard is layout. A standard computer keyboard layout will familiarise the user with the vast majority of computers used in the world of business and professional applications; very important if the purpose of purchasing a computer is educational.

● RAM

One of the most important features of a computer is the amount of RAM, or memory, included. In general the more powerful and exciting a computer program is the more RAM it requires. But take care, all computers are advertised quoting the total RAM used in the system. Computers use up a great deal of their own RAM for storing essential data and particularly in supporting the graphics display and the CPU.
If it is less than 32K think again, is it enough?

● Computer Language

It is too dificult to program a computer in its own binary language so high level languages are used, the most popular being BASIC. However, there are a number of BASICs, some being very different from the rest.
A de facto standard in the computer industry is Microsoft BASIC.
Learn this one and you will be able to program in the majority of computer BASICs; such an important point if a home computer is to be used to educate your children to face the technology of the future.

● Expansion

As your interest and knowledge of computing grows, you will need a computer system that will grow with you; able to accommodate Printers, Disk-drives, Joysticks, Communications Modem, and Colour Monitor, as well as produce HI-FI sound effects.

Choosing the right system carefully will save you from throwing your money away. Check full specification, plus peripherals and software prices, before you buy. Preferably choose a Real computer system that can expand to meet your needs.

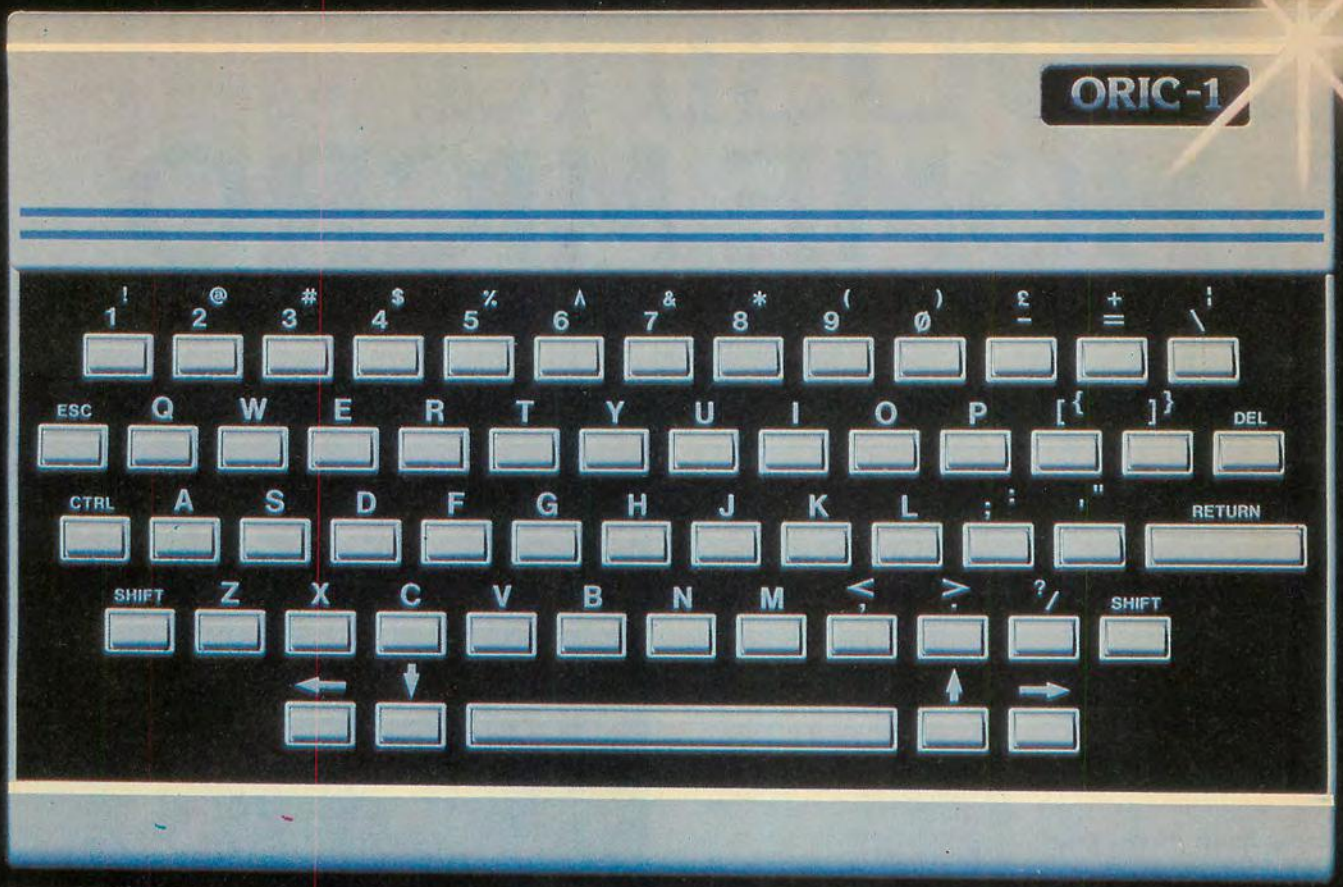
● Software

The computer you choose should have a growing selection of utility software to make the most of its capability.
Remember, computing is here to stay. You can't learn to compute on a toy, or a device which does not behave like a real computer.
In short, look out for a computer which offers all the points above, and you will be sure of getting the best value for money.

To find out which company offers you the right choice, with:-

- Good value, high specification, quality micros.
- A quality, 4 colour, plain paper printer/ plotter.
- Communications Modem.
- Micro Disk Drives.
- Comprehensive and growing range of software

TURNOVER... →



The Growing System

ORIC 3" MICRO FLOPPY DISK DRIVE

Coming soon the incredible new 3" Oric Micro Drives. Small size, Compact, High precision disks with storage capabilities from 100K Bytes to in excess of 1 Megabyte unformatted. With their own built-in power supply, these easy to use units will add big system capability to your home micro.

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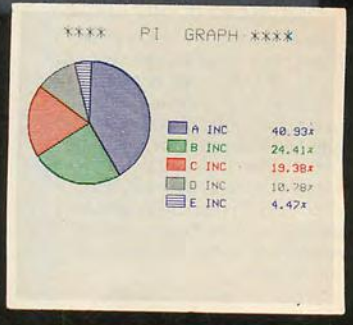
The Oric Colour Printer is quality engineered to provide 4 colour hard copy on plain paper, with superb graphics and text capability, printing either 40 columns or 80 columns. It prints in red, green, black and blue, onto a 4½" width standard paper roll. With a print speed of 12 characters a second, the MCP 40 comes with its own power supply and all necessary leads to connect straight into your Oric or to any standard Centronics interface.



This superb printer represents excellent value at just **£169.95 including VAT.**

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The right choice for real computing

ORIC-1

Before making your final choice, check any other home micro in the same price bracket, against the incredible specification of the ORIC-1.

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- Superb styling / Full colour display
- Choice of 16K or 48K RAM
- Latest design technology and circuitry
- Real sound – 8 octaves plus Hi-Fi output
- Centronics printer interface
- Colour printer / Disk Drives
- Communications Modem
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OFFER PRICE £129.95

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LATEST RELEASE
THE HOBBIT

The fast growing success of ORIC-1 means that an incredible number of software titles are becoming available for your Oric. With many well known titles from independent software houses, plus exclusive ORIC SOFTWARE from TANSOFT, you can now drive your Oric towards its full potential.
Below is a small selection from Tansoft's range, all of which offer superb value.

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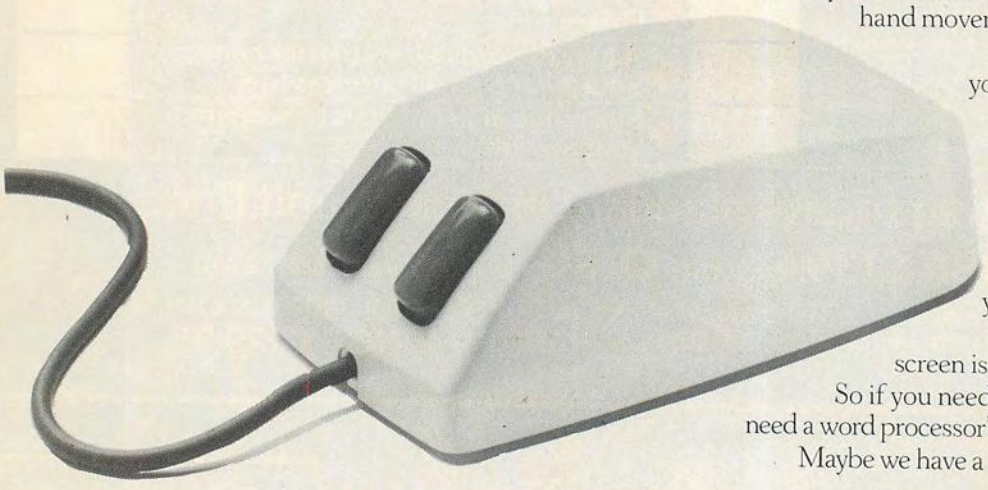
mouse[1] (mows) *n.* (*pl.* **mice**). Unique hand-operated device to facilitate fast operation of WORD, Microsoft's sophisticated word processing software package, starting with the IBM PC.



In producing WORD, we have redefined word-processing software for the foreseeable future.

No longer is it necessary to have a word processor if you want to do word processing.

All you need is an IBM PC and a Microsoft WORD software package.

And away you go.

Instantly your IBM is transformed from a mere microcomputer into a word processor with as many functions as you will ever need.

For a start, it's fast.

(This is where the mouse comes in.)

It pushes whole sentences around with natural hand movements.

And it's sure. Even if you're not.

With special undo facility, multiple windowing and context sensitive help.

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And what you see on the screen is what you get on paper.

So if you need word processing but don't need a word processor's price, give us a call.

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PRA12/3W1

● **Circle No. 109**

(continued from page 15)

PC includes Notebook, a simple database system which searches unstructured text, and a UCSD-p run-time support system. Word-processing files from the PC can now be transferred to the Wangwriter and other Wang office systems equipment.

The price of the Wang Professional Computer has been cut. The cheapest entry-level system with a single drive and no monitor costs £1,835 plus VAT. A full system with two 360K drives and a VDU costs £2,675 plus VAT. The Local Interconnect option costs £285, and Notebook costs £145 — all prices plus VAT.

Contact Wang (U.K.) Ltd, Wang House, 661 London Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4EH. Telephone: 01-560 4151.

Signet 3

KENNETH BAKER, Minister for Information Technology, recently opened the new Shelton Instruments factory in North London. The government's British Technology Group is one of its financial backers. On view for the first time was the Signet 3, an expandable multi-user small-business system, which was to be officially unveiled at Compec.

Contact Shelton Instruments, 74-77 White Lion Street, London N1 9PJ. Telephone: 01-278 6272.

Spectrum joystick

DOWNSWAY is now offering a joystick which plugs directly into the Spectrum and which can be programmed to suit any keyboard-operated game. You press the key on the keyboard while moving the joystick in the desired direction, which is then remembered until you reprogram it or turn off the computer. The joystick costs £22.95.

Contact Downsway Electronics (U.K.) Ltd, Depot Road, Epsom, Surrey KT17 4RJ. Telephone: Epsom (03727) 27222.

The Workslate

CONVERGENT TECHNOLOGIES, which brought you the powerful Burroughs B-20 micro, has just announced a portable for the executive. The workslate has the familiar tools such as a calculator, calendar and address book, and it also has a built-in spreadsheet.

Unlike the Tandy/NEC/Olivetti lap computers — but like the Epson HX-20 — it has a built-in microcassette recorder. The LCD display is, however, bigger than all these at 46 characters by 16 lines. Overall dimensions are about the same at 11.25in. by 8.5in. but it only weighs 3lb. Like Sony with the Typecorder, CT has taken the line that real executives do not type, they dictate. Thus the keyboard is not typewriter-like and the microcassette records speech as well as programs and data.

The Workslate comes with an AC adaptor, modular phone-jack cable, soft case and instruction tapes. A printer is an optional accessory.

The Workslate has initially been launched at $895 via the American Express Christmas Catalogue. After that market has been filled it should be available through U.S. stores, then reach the UK some time in 1984.

Contact Convergent Technologies, 38/40 Sycamore Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 5DR. Telephone: (02403) 28515.

U-Net for the BBC

ACCORDING TO U-Microcomputers, Acorn cannot deliver Econet that compares with U-Net because it needs a second 6502, something that is in short supply. U-Microcomputers says, however, that it can now deliver U-Net for the BBC Micro, allowing up to 32 micros to share up to six disc drives and one or two printers.

U-Net is a star network that has established itself on the Apple II, and been on field trial on the BBC Micro since this summer. Once you have acquired U-Net, a BBC Micro satellite kit costs £50 plus VAT.

Contact U-Microcomputers, Winstanley Industrial Estate, Long Lane, Warrington, Cheshire. Telephone: (0925) 54117.

Phoenix Stratos

THE PHOENIX STRATOS business computer runs CP/M and is said to be faster than many computers costing considerably more. Its main selling points, however, are that it packs twin 8in. floppy-disc drives offering 2.5Mbyte of storage and it costs under £2,000. If you want to know more then you have to get in touch with Phoenix direct.

Contact Phoenix Systems, Second Floor, Buckingham House, 42 Princess Street, Manchester. Telephone: 061-236 1172.

In brief

- **Olivetti** had the misfortune to pick the wrong processor, the Zilog Z-8000, for its personal micro. Olivetti has already produced an 8086 card for the M-20 to offer MS-DOS capability. Now it is signing a deal with Corona Data Systems, the manufacturer of an IBM PC work-alike. Olivetti will make the machine in Europe.
- **The Zeus 3X** is a 32-user micro with one Z-80A and one Intel 8088 for each user. It is being sold by Millbank Computers of Twickenham. Telephone: 01-891 4691.
- **Almarc Data Systems** has added the Motorola 68000 running Unix to the range of processors in its Spirit micro. A 10Mbyte system costs £4,000 plus VAT. Telephone: Nottingham (0602) 52657.
- **Cifer's Model 2887** has a Z-80, a 5Mbyte or 10Mbyte hard disc, runs CP/M Plus and costs £3,395 or £3,995. For £995 you can add a 68000 to run Unix. Telephone: Melksham (0225) 706361.
- **Imp** has announced a range of support products for its powerful 68000-based IMP-68. They include 1Mbyte memory cards and interfaces to a range of discs and tape streamers. Imp also has Unix software including Uniplex word processing, Mince, Superfile and a CP/M emulator. Telephone: Consett (0207) 503481.
- **Plessey Microsystems** has developed a bubble-memory system, the PBS-90M, with 4Mbyte to 24Mbyte capacity. It is intended to replace disc systems in military applications. Telephone: Towcester (0327) 50312.
- **Mom Systems** of Aberdeen has launched a configurable communications package to link micros to micros, minis or mainframes in asynchronous or bisynchronous modes. Mom says it has been field tested in the North Sea. Telephone: Aberdeen (0224) 571825.
- **Grundy's** Newbrain micro may continue after all. It seems that the Dutch distributor Tradecom International wants to take it over.

G. W. COMPUTERS LTD — LONDON'S WEST END — NATIONWIDE OVERNITE SERVICE — MORE PRODUCT RANGES — BETTER SERVICE — PROBABLY THE WIDEST SELECTION OF NETWORKS... MICROS...AND PRINTERS ON DISPLAY NATIONWIDE

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*****FEATURES*****

- 1400 character record sizes
- mathematical scratchpad
- record relational indexes
- translateable to any language
- User-defineable reporting
- field protection/classification
- either-or. same as. greater. smaller
- sorts 'alpha or numeric' any window
- 12 online file architectures
- 32000 records per filename
- 20 main/200 sub fields per record
- field and record related formulae
- 'Jump-to' any of 32000 records per file
- random/binary/key/multiple field search
- 'if-then' questioning
- file protection/password entry
- range match. not match. integer match
- sort speed 500 records per 20 seconds
- 12 online file architectures
- 240 fields using cross-referencing
- cross-record calculations
- 'Jump-to' any record in 12 files
- User-defineable files/field words/sizes
- endless 'either-or' matching
- formulate/recall on selection criteria
- 13 interrogation question types
- short filing output/audit trails
- Word-star & Mbasic compatible

DBMS III.7 NEW SWITCH MODE FACILITY ENABLES YOU TO CROSS UP TO 12 DIFFERENT FILES (32000 RECORDS PER FILE) PRE-SELECTING ANY OF UP TO 20 FIELDS PER RECORD/FILE FOR DISPLAY/PRINT OUTPUT (240 FIELDS) IN ALL. ONE MASSIVE ENQUIRY CAN PASS THROUGH 384,000 RECORDS

You might have two files whose records are directly related to each other, so that the first file (say containing names and addresses) refers to the second file (say financial and other information relating to the same record numbers in the first file) directly. Then you can simply select that in file 1 you are interested in just the name and telephone numbers, whereas in file 2, you are interested in the income, trading period and number of branches, information. Your enquiry can then pass through both files highlighting that information only. Actually there doesn't need to be a strict correlation between the same record numbers in different files, and you can also on just one JUMP command go to any record in any of the 32000 records in any of the twelve files and carry on cross-referencing from there onwards.

DBMS'S MACROS WORK FROM THE MOMENT YOU INSERT THE 'TASK DISK' IN THE COMPUTER

Simply design your file, give its fields your words, setup your report mask, and then enter your records. Switch to 'automatic drive' and formulated any task you wish to program to fulfill, the task is stored as a macro. Take a copy of the program on another 'task disk' and from then on, the task disk will function without a single key-stroke. Think of a number of such 'task disks' such as "stock-re-order reports"; "stock-valuation reports"; "analysis"; "patient history analysis"; "research-analysis"; "budgetting-analysis"; "vehicle-location control"; "librarian analysis"; "plus more?"

Not only does this program surpass most of its kind that you might buy elsewhere, but if you buy the hardware from us, then you get it FREE . . . DBMS II (WITHOUT MACROS) AND DBMS III ARE FULLY IMPLEMENTED UNDER CPM-86 (tm) AND MS-DOS (tm) I.E.: SIRIUS/VICTOR/IBM DBMS II IS £395.00 (or £250.00 by mail order ex. training) . . . DBMS III is £575.000 (or £295.00 by mail order ex. training).

MICRO-COMPUTERS

INTERTEC	-Superbrain 64K RAM/320K disks	1895.00
	-Superbrain 64K RAM/700K disks	2395.00
	-Compustar 64K RAM/320K disks	2195.00
	-Compustar 64K RAM/700K disks	2595.00
NORTHSTAR	-Advantage 64K RAM/700K disks	£2195.00
(exc DOS)	-Advantage 64K RAM/5.3M disks	£3095.00
TELEVIDEO	-802 64K RAM/700K disks	2395.00
	-802H 64K RAM/7.3M disks	3950.00
	-806 64K RAM/10M disks	5195.00
	-816 256K/750K disks	*£3350.00
ACT	-Sirius 1 256K/1.2M disks	*£2195.00
	-Sirius 2 256K/2.4M disks	*£2695.00
	-Sirius 3 256K/10MEG disks	*£3995.00
VICTOR	-9000 256K/1.2M disks	*£2195.00
IBM	-PC 64K RAM/640K disks	£2595.00
	-PC1 330K/640K disks	£3195.00
IBM	XT (TEN MEGABYTE)	£4480.00
IBM	XF (FIVE MEGABYTE)	£3650.00
ALTOS	ACS800-2 64K RAM/1M disks	2195.00
	ACS800-10 208K/10.5Meg disks	5695.00
NEC	APC 128K.RAM/2M disks	call.00
CORVUS	Concept 16 bit pc	call.00
SANYO	G80 64K RAM/320K disks	1195.00

All computer prices include mbasic as standard.
All prices marked * are 8/16 bit machines.

WE STOCK MOST OF THE BEST KNOWN SOFTWARE ALSO MOST OF THE BEST KNOWN BRANDS OF PRINTERS & PERIPHERALS FROM 300.00 TO 2700.00 (OKI/EPSON/DRE/NEC/QUME/ANADEX/RICOH)

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	-DP 9501	1045.00
	-DP 9501 (A)	1145.00
QUME	-9/45 R/O	1995.00
	-9/55 R/O	2195.00
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	-825	995.00
DIABLO	-630	1995.00
RICOH	-RP1600	1695.00
OLYMPIA	-ESW 103 14 CPS	975.00

SOFTWARE

G.W.L.	-BUS V8.00 (Accounts)	275.00
	-DBMS II (Database)	*£395.00
	-DBMS II (by mail order only)	*£250.00
	-DBMS III (database)	*£575.00
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	-Sales Ledger	*£95.00
	-Purchase Ledger	*£95.00
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Software formats on all micros in our hardware list.
All prices marked £ are available 8/16 bit formats.

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POPULAR BRANDS OF EQUIPMENT WE SELL
MICROS: Sirius/Victor/I.B.M./DEC
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Hard disks networks and multiplexors
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most of the best known brands of software

SYSTEM DEAL (our speciality) SAVES YOU 1500.00+

Buy any computer, any printer and 150.00 value diskettes add £85.00 for cables and testing.
add 10% for return to base warranty for 1 year (optional)
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Training optional extra £120.00
and get completely *****FREE*****

cpm handbook	50 basic exercises	2000 sheets paper
DBMS III.7	magic wand w/proc	magic calc
mbasic 80	diagnostics	msort/dsort
recover	autoload	instant basic
library boxs	disk/games	DT/AS/NS sorts

Total Value £1525.00
Based on 8 bit hardware, 16 bit software varies.
Here's a typical example of a complete system deal

1-Sirius 128k ram/1.2 megabyte disks	2195.00
2-Oki microline 80 printer	295.00
3-Cables & testing	85.00
4-Diskettes	150.00
5-price differential on magic/wand for word-star	100.00
software described above ***** FREE *****	2825.00

We specialise in 'STANDARD MICRO-PRINTER SYSTEMS' as well as 'NETWORK SYSTEMS BASED ON A SHARED HARD DISK'.
The range of computer products (mostly ex stock) includes the most popular brands of micro-computers, printers, modems, buffers, spoolers and software.

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CORVUS	-6 Meg hard disk	1950.00
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AST	-port expanders (4 tmnls to 1 prtr)	395.00
GIX	-port expander (switcher)	95.00

NOTE: Corvus drives with multiplexor may network sirius . . Superbrain . . Concept . . PET . . Victor . . IBM . .

SOFTWARE COMMENT!!!
INTEGRATED SOFTWARE IS PROPERLY REPRESENTED, when the degree of integration reflects the ability to refer to as many different files, as well as employ as many different functions, under as many different modes as possible in one program only. This principle not being observed, will confer upon your purchases the attribute of their being expensive as an aggregate even though individually they are cheap. "DBMS III.7" and "THE KEY" are comparably worthy of such a label.

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Please call at our showroom only by prior appointment. Unless expressly agreed, all warranties are commercial 90 days return to base for parts and labour. Annual warranties and maintenance facilities available nationwide through closely related third parties.

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AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FOR POTENTIAL SYSTEM BUYERS

Any serious buyer knows that although the HARDWARE and SOFTWARE are both inter-dependant, the choice of software is CRITICAL to the consequence of having useless piece of hardware nor not.
With this in mind our standard system deal gives you the software free with a system purchase. However, if you want more!

NOW we have a piece of software that is a challenge to the highest state of the art on micro-computers today. It's the first of its kind world-wide. It is called THE KEY, and it will unlock the power of your micro to the limits of your imagination. It is very expensive however, because it is the first to embody many features of other programs, in one single program that has over-lapping functions. It costs 995.00 Stg., and is available with a system purchase.

it features, the entire list of functions already covered by our program called DBMS III.7a to be seen elsewhere in our advertisement. PLUS. + + + + + + + +
Paint any form including upwards from 100 (depending upon size of ram in hardware) data fields on the screen. Screen width up to 250 columns. Page lengths 100 lines.

The form might be a letter where data fields on the screen. Screen width up to 250 columns. Page lengths 100 liens.

The form might be a letter where data fields are name-addresses. Search files and accept any fields on teh database into any fields on the letter. The form might be a spreadsheet, where searches call records (in columnated style) from the database and perform calculations, the difference here is that unlike other 'calc' programs giving you 254 lines per spreadsheet, THE KEY gives you 32000 lines if your database has that many records.

The standard attributes of any field, allow you to SEARCH OTHER FILES for fields to accept into any field on the current form, plus allowance to POST OTHER FILES any fields from the current form into any fields on that file. RELATE TO AS MANY OTHER FILES, as the number of data fields you have on the master form. Make data fields CALCULATE AGAINST FORMULAE, and other data fields. VALIDATE DATA INPUTS criticially character by character; numerically, alphabetically and date-wise.

NO MANUAL NEEDED, all help menues accessible by hitting 'esc' at any point in the three major modes of activity (create, data entry, data query).

You can set up dozens of individual files that eventually are inter-connected through one master form; like an invoice, order, personnel-file, stock control, mail-shot. The master form may at every juncture of a data field, go outside the current form to supplementary forms for data retrieval, or post-filing.
Come along the computing road with us. We're out in front so you'll get the best there is at the price. On IBM and SIRIUS.

The first robot-concurrent-forms-database-text-processor-spreadsheet-no-manual-all-in-one-program.

G. W. COMPUTERS LTD — Tel: 01-631 4818

Contains the highest state of the art software available today

FORMS/TEXT/CALC/DBMS IV ALL IN ONE PROGRAM — ''KEY'' — at £995

When you budget for a complete system of software you eventually end up with a host of packages like, Sales, Purchases, Nominal, Data, Text, Calc, Mailshot, Invoice, Order, Workflow, Personnel, and so on.
The list is endless and the outlay several thousands of pounds.

Features. Design a form as wide as a window of 250 characters, long as needed. Cursor movements are 'left, right, up, down, delete left delete right, tab right-left-up-down' Paint your form as you like directly on the screen.

Text..... Write a letter as you see it on the screen, edit it then simply enter ^P to print.

Calc..... Set into the form, your data fields, ''£££££'' and specific file-related activities, formulae and validation checks.
Enter values and see the spreadsheet calculate itself.

Database. Search files for data to be inserted to fields specified.
All the features of DBMS III, explained elsewhere in our ad.

Here's an example of an invoice you might design for your stationery .....
You could design your own spreadsheet, order form, statement, or any other kind of form that is required to fit your existing stationery.

INVOICE <0>£££££££££££

To £<1>£££££££££££
£<2>£££££££££££££££
£<3>£££££££££££££££
£<4>£££££££££££
£<5>£££££££££

From: G.W. Ltd
55 Bedford Court Mans.
Bedford Avenue
London W.C.1.
Tel: 01-636 8210

Date <6>££.££ Tax point <7>££.££ Agent <8>£££

Quantity	Description	Cost	Tax	Total
<9>£££	<10>£££££££££££££	<11>££	<12>££	<13>£££
<14>££	<15>£££££££££££££	<16>££	<17>££	<18>£££

and so on...

Total...<19>£££££ Tax...<20>££££

<??> items <1 >to <5 >internal command to request name input, and then search an address file for details.
<??> items <6 >to <7 >request date input and validate.
<??> item <8 >request agent number and validate range.
<??> <9 >request quantity, validate range.
<??> <10>request description, search file, accept, and calculate fields <11>, <12>, <13>, if finished invoice then calculate fields <19> and <20>

Now comes the more valuable facility, you can provide the 'FORM' with file-related instructions, not only to request a 'console' input for a file search against names, and stock, but after the invoice is finished the fields you have selected may be passed to related files.

EG: Send fields <0 >, <1 >, <6 >, <7 >, <11>, <12>, <13>, <19>, <20> to a sales ledger.
Then send fields <9 >, <10>, <11>, to product analysis file.
Then send fields <0 >, <1 >, <7 >, <19>, <20> to V.A.T. file
Then send fields <10>, <11>, <12>, <13> to Nominal ledger.

Available at present only on SIRUS/IBM PC.

● Circle No. 110

There's no room for a comedy of errors when it comes to choosing the right accounting program.

The wrong decision will produce a very sad clown indeed.

You can, if you really wish, pay £1,000 or more for a sprawling, highly complicated, 4–7 disk monster, with a manual you can't lift without a course of weight training, or understand without a brain transplant. Alternatively, for just £375, you can discover the unique simplicity of SAGE.

SAGE produces the only accounting program which is truly integrated and uses only one program and one data diskette.
● Sales and Purchase Ledgers, ● Nominal Ledger, ● Cash Book, ● Journal Entries, ● Trial Balance, ● VAT Return, ● Monthly and Annual Accounts, ● Age Analyses, ● Statements and Audit Trail – every accounting function you need in one compact and comprehensive package. The SAGE program is also widely used for Incomplete Records Accounting (without requiring modification). It can therefore be used by practising accountants for both functions. Its efficiency is built on simplicity–and its simplicity accounts for the price.

The SAGE accounting program is easy-to-learn and easy-to-use, with a short, clear and simple manual.

It's fully automatic – which means no shuffling through the program to find the section you need.

It's complete and self-contained – no expensive modules to buy every time you need an extra function.

It's suitable for use on CP/M or MS–DOS machines and has so far been implemented on Osborne, Superbrain, Epson QX–10, Sirius, Victor 9000, IBM PC, BBC/Torch Z80 and ITT with others in the pipeline.

What's more, the SAGE accounting program has been successfully tested in hundreds of installations and is the only system of its type – is as effective in a one-man business as in a multi million pound corporation.

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Return the coupon and we will send you more information and the name of your nearest dealer.

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● Circle No. 111

sinclair special 5

Inside... New Interface 2 and ROM cartridges! New Software!

TAKING NEW SOFTWARE IN NEW DIRECTIONS

You'll see that this issue of Sinclair Special devotes considerable space to software. Why, when we've so much to say about hardware and peripherals? Simply because at Sinclair we believe in supporting first-class hardware with first-class software.

This month sees the start of a new commitment to education in our catalogue, both for adults and children.

In the field of micro theory, we've programs like Beyond BASIC and Make-a-Chip, which take you from the creation of simple ZX® assembler subsets to simulated circuit design projects.

There's Musicmaster, to teach you music terminology, note values and composition.

And if you're keen to beat your Spectrum at chess (which can be hard), you'll certainly want to try Chess Tutor 1, the first program in a complete chess masterclass.

Coming soon...

In the pipeline are many new releases, some of which break completely new ground. LOGO and micro-PROLOG for instance. They're fifth generation languages which will take you and your Spectrum closer than ever before to the creation and application of artificial intelligence.

A formal agreement between Sinclair and Macmillan Education has been announced, the first results of which will be published this autumn. These consist of five programs in a complete early reading course plus the first four of a series of programs based on Macmillan's top selling Science Horizons Scheme. All programs are designed for use in schools or the home.

And with Blackboard software, we're publishing six more home education programs for primary school children. Covering alphabet, spelling and punctuation, each of these programs is a true gem, unlike any other education software, and fascinating to run. Even for adults!

I believe that these new titles represent a major advance in educational software for the home.

New ROM software too!

You may well have heard news of ZX Interface 2® and ROM cartridge programs. You'll find full details of the Interface and its software on the facing page (and there's an order form on the back page too!). These offer an instant games playing facility at unbeatable prices, and expand the possibilities of using your Spectrum in yet another direction.

Alison Maguire

Alison Maguire
Applications Software Manager

SOFTWARE UPDATE

The latest cassette software for ZX® Computers

Chess Tutor 1

For 48K RAM Spectrum. **£9.95.**

Chess Tutor is a new way of learning all about chess – using your ZX Spectrum.®

It starts from the beginning by teaching you about the chess pieces and the way they move – including castling, en passant, promotion, check, checkmate, stalemate and perpetual check.

Then it teaches you the basic tactics – pins, forks, double attacks and skewers.

There are over 120 exercises and over 200 questions for you to answer – with demonstrations and hints from your ZX Spectrum when you want them.

You can choose which parts of the course you want – and even experienced players may be surprised at what they can learn from Chess Tutor.

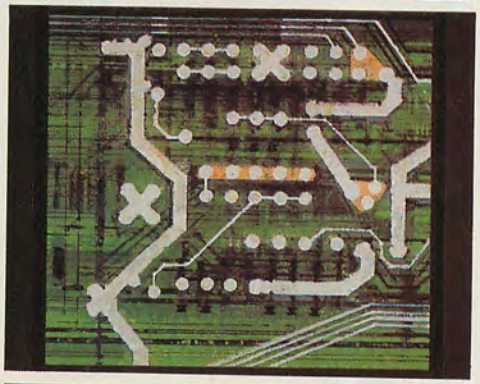
Musicmaster

For 48K RAM Spectrum. **£9.95.**

Musicmaster turns your ZX Spectrum into a musical instrument which will not only play tunes, but will also demonstrate key signatures, durations of notes, and scales.

You can write your own tunes – in any key – play them over and over again, save them on tape, modify them.

You can either write your music on a stave, or place a simple overlay on your Spectrum for a 17-note keyboard.



Make-a-Chip

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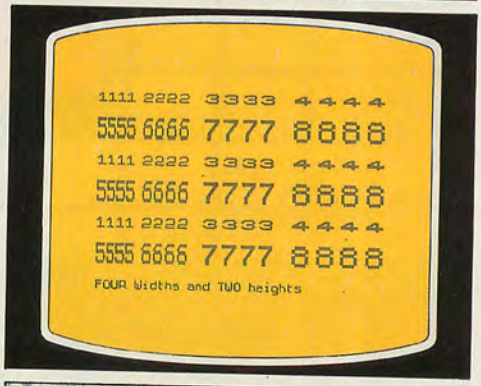
Make-a-Chip teaches you the basic elements of circuit design, shows you how they fit together, and then lets you design and test your own circuits.

When you have designed a circuit, you can give it inputs and outputs and your ZX Spectrum will check it for you. Then it will run it, or tell you what's wrong so that you can modify it.

Make-a-Chip is a fascinating way of finding out how computer logic works.



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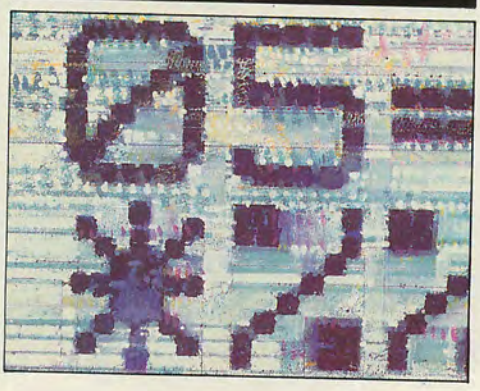

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Full-colour high-resolution graphics with sound.

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Robbie the Robot sits in his garden. Help him fetch compost to cultivate his prize Thyrgodian Megga Chrysanthodil. Help him make the right choice of pesticide, to ward off devilish insects. Stop the insects breeding to overwhelming numbers before Robbie's plant has bloomed. PSSST is horticulture with a horrendous twist!

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Dodge and swerve using your thrust button, turn on a planetoid... fire! But beware – the alien ship moves fast to destroy you with cluster bombs. And when it comes to the crunch, use your hyperspace button!

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Horace is forever being chased around the park by guards.

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Set in a future time ruled by cars and trophies, in a land where petrol replaces gold, and status is possession of the 8 Great Cups of Ultimate.

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A program with outstanding multi-directional movement, graphic features, and a playing area equivalent to more than 600 times actual screen area.

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Guide Horace on the hazardous journey to the cobwebbed house full of poisonous spiders.

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And when a spider is spinning a new section, you're safe to attack and destroy it!

Kill all the spiders, and a new web appears... with even more spiders to catch.

Full-colour high-resolution graphics.

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You're Charlie the Chef, who keeps his ingredients locked in the larder. But if the ingredients escape, they bring the inedible Nasties with them!

You must daze the escaping ingredients with flour bombs, and knock them into the mixing bowl. Stop them getting into the dustbin, at all costs! And beware of Nasties that get into the mixing bowl!

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FT conference

Jack Schofield was among those attending this exclusive personal computer event.

IN MID-OCTOBER the Intercontinental Hotel, London, was packed with the cream of the British computer industry for a two-day conference organised by the *Financial Times*. The theme was The Professional Personal Computer: Markets and Strategies. The message that came across was that the micro market is booming, and there is money to be made from both hardware and software — especially if you are IBM.

Speakers on the first day included Floyd Kvamme of Apple Computer Inc., Cyril Yansouni of Hewlett-Packard and Alex McIntosh of IBM U.K. Noticeable by his absence was the personable Adam Osborne, who was due to speak on "Where the Professional Computer is going". It would have been interesting to hear where the Osborne 1 is going.

Jean Yates, President of Yates Ventures and well known Unix watcher, gave an interesting talk on "The Likely Winners and Losers". The winners will apparently be IBM, Apple and any one of the three others, take your pick. In a humorous aside, Ms Yates declined to name losers on the grounds that some of them were her clients.

Imitation IBMs

However she did point out the difficulties faced by the massed ranks of IBM imitators. Most are buying sub-assemblies from the same or similar sources, and could therefore be squeezed on price. They are following IBM standards, so they could be in trouble if IBM changes the standards. No one could achieve 100 percent compatibility with IBM, leading to potential problems attracting software writers. The dealers and distributors are overcrowded with products, and some must lose the fight for shelf space. Finally, there is a lack of mini and mainframe products in the line-up to provide an upgrade path.

Dr Alex McIntosh, speaking for IBM, gave nothing away. However, he did drop a few hints about IBM's possible entrance into the small micro market. Showing a *Newsweek* graph of the booming market he said: "Seriously, if a sector of your industry was showing such runaway growth as this, would you sit back and ignore it? Of course not, and neither could we." Later he added: "IBM has been in every area of computing since the earliest vacuum tube monsters . . . In this light, it's unthinkable that a major industry trend like personal computing would not eventually involve IBM." So why not home computing?

For me, however, the highlight of the day was the presentation by Daniel Fylstra, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officers of Visicorp. His unstated theme was the background to the integrated software product VisiOn, which is a Lisa-like suite promised for the IBM PC. He showed how the requirements for the suite arose from the microcomputer's transition from an individual item into an all-purpose office work station.

Day 2 started with a new chairman, Ian McNaught-Davies, and a talk from Ted Stein of the $6.5 billion insurance company Connecticut Mutual. It was willing to face a fact about microcomputerisation that most large companies are not: that "by the time an organisation makes a proper business decision, cost justified and all that, the technology is obsolete".

One of their number saw an Apple on TV and they decided to replace their 1972-vintage network with micros. That was in July 1981, and they called it "the Apple solution". When the equipment was shipped in June 1982 they had, by that time, fixed on the IBM PC. They bought 1,000 of them. They also made themselves into a computer store and sold a further 450 PCs, plus peripherals and software, to their independent sales outlets.

The afternoon session was opened by Brian Androlia of ACT, who gave the background to the launch of the Apricot micro. Key decisions were that the machine should be designed to match an existing software base — so the Apricot was made compatible with the Sirius — and that it should appeal to the replacement market. He reckoned that most Apples and Pets had already been written off in the company books, so a smart new machine should appeal to these users, as well as to new users.

With the minimum worthwhile aim of producing 3,000 machines a month, Androlia said it cost £11 million to launch the Apricot. "You have to buy the best," he said. And, he pointed out, the entry cost was getting higher every month.

The one thing which gave everyone pause was Androlia's comment that "rarely does a successful computer manufacturer produce a good follow-on product. I can't think of one." ACT, however, is already working on a follow-up to the Apricot.

The next talk was from Susumu Aizawa of Epson, Japan. He described recent developments there, leaving us with the impression that the Japanese have LCDs, printers, floppy-disc drives and portable micros pretty much sewn up. What next? The "fifth-generation" micro. It will have "enormous artificial intelligence and a huge database, and its ultra high-speed CPU will operate under critically important new software." He added: "At that time, perhaps, the Japanese will be able to shed their reputation for imitation."

The final speaker was Dr Horsnell of Philips, and he poured a welcome dose of cold water on some of the more gung-ho thinking that, over two days, had begun to take hold. He pointed out that the EEC budgeted £8 billion to pay subsidies to farmers via the Common Agricultural Policy. Worse still, the budget had just been overspent by some £240 million. Meanwhile, the government had only managed to come up with £100 million for our own Estrial fifth-generation research.

Small is best

In the final forum discussion, Ian McNaught-Davies demurred. He considered that all the good software has come from small, under-financed entrepreneurial organisations working in backrooms. CP/M, MS-DOS, and VisiCalc are famous examples. "Mac" went so far as to say that if large software teams wanted to increase their productivity by 40 percent this could be done by shooting 20 percent of their members. My own impression is that, by and large, he is right.

In the micro business — both hardware and software — agile, small companies outperform large ones most of the time. In fact the whole micro market has been created by hobbyists and home enthusiasts, and it is only recently that the large corporations have sought to cash in. However, notwithstanding the success of Apple, it is true that the small companies often fail to capitalise on their developments — due to a shortage of capital.

Everyone agreed that the British banks were hopeless when it came to backing ideas with money, and that a ready supply of venture capital was what kept the American micro boom going. That in turn accounted for their 80 percent share of the world market. Dr Horsnell may well be right too, but pouring government money into schemes has generally been ineffective.

Still, if this *Financial Times* conference encourages British capitalists to take a few more risks backing innovative micro companies it will have helped.

Whether the delegates got full value for their £500 conference fee is another matter. Separate talks did not relate to one another, and there was not enough hard information. Still, plenty more was doubtless exchanged in the bar afterwards.

Ratones robot

John Billingsley supervised the 1983 Euromouse finals in Madrid. Here he reports the results.

HAVE YOU EVER tried to explain to a Spaniard who speaks no English that you want to make a metal template to guide the drilling of 1,088 precise holes in a three-metre square of chipboard? That's easy, compared with getting him to buy emulsion paint rather than wood paint for the running surface. Next time I go to Spain I'll make sure I've learnt the Spanish for more than Micromouse — *los ratones robot*.

Superlite I and II were the first finalist mice on the scene in the Telecommunication department of Madrid Technical University. Next to arrive were the Finland team from Tampere with 3½ mice. The aptly named Lego eventually failed to qualify, largely because it fell apart into a heap of bricks every time it ran. Massive Microsaurus came to defend its title, while Manu and Telu were based on a nimble tricycle, but shared only one set of mechanical parts. We agreed that both could compete, but could only win a single prize.

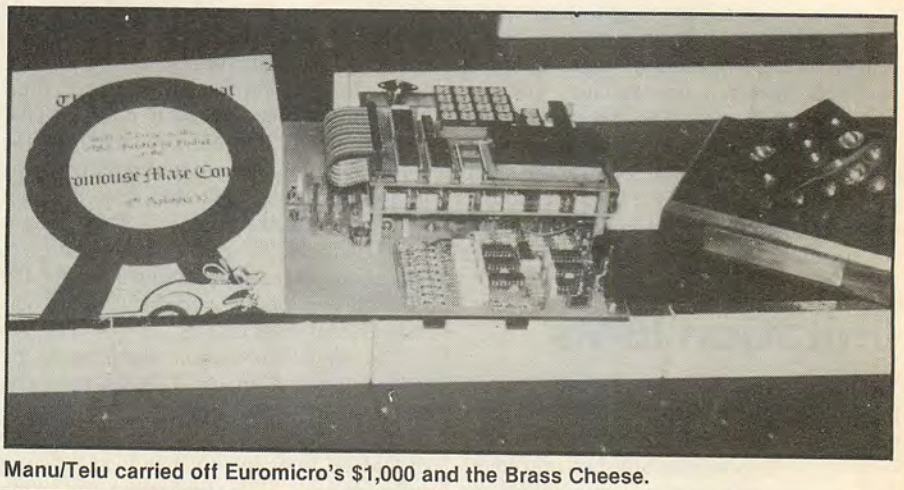
The boys from Mador School, Bangor-on-Dee turned up, thanks to the Welsh Development Agency. Fullyautomatix II had improved greatly since Earls Court, but to live up to its name needed some debugging. Yes, they had seen the Ilford boys on the plane. No, they had no idea where they were staying. Madrid has a lot of hotels.

The laboratory adjoining the maze became a hive of industry as tests took place on a skeleton 80-wall maze. The walls, each containing two nails, had been laboriously carried in my suitcase. I still wonder what Airport security made of the X-ray!

Mid-afternoon on Tuesday the British hopes arrived: Knownaim, Thumper, T4, T3 and T1 — plus the remaining maze walls. Some astute detective-work had tracked down Clement Chambers and the troupe he was sponsoring from Ilford County High School. Orac brought the total of mice to 13. Five would have to be eliminated before Thursday's final.

The qualifying maze complete, trials began in earnest. One after another mice reached the centre in times which shrank from an initial five minutes to an alarming 15 seconds. A redesign of the finals maze was necessary so that the timing would not require an accuracy of hundredths of a second. Microsaurus, Knownaim, Telu and T4 all looked evenly matched, and the contest was set to be a close one.

An audience of 400 crammed into the lecture theatre next day. The judges were Jan Wilmink, the Euromicro Chairman,



Manu/Telu carried off Euromicro's $1,000 and the Brass Cheese.

Mouse history

In 1979 when planning started, the organisers of Euromicro '80 felt that the conference would benefit from some light relief. The IEEE magazine *Spectrum* was starting to print reports of a Micromouse contest in the United States. How could we organise a similar contest here?

The next issue of *Spectrum* described all the problems they had encountered with a corner-target maze, when high-speed wall followers started to out-perform the more intelligent mice. It was decided that the walls and passage-width dimensions should comply with the American contest but that other features, such as the sandpaper floor, should be abanonded. In particular it was decided to place the target at the centre of a square maze, designed on a 16 by 16 grid.

After the initial publicity enquiries flooded in, but as the day for the trial contest at Portsmouth Polytechnic approached mice started to fall by the wayside. In July 1980, the first British trials were held with just five mice. Plessey's Fred and Marconi's Meryl were far from complete — Fred could only spin in circles and Meryl relied on a lot of cheating "fly-by-wire".

The boys from Worthing Sixth Form College had their wires crossed and Algernon could not travel in a straight line. The two other mice had been constructed as final-year projects in Portsmouth Polytechnic and the only one to show real promise was Free-Wheelin Franklin which could at least navigate a straight passage and a couple of corners before becoming bewildered. The more erratically the mice performed, the more the audience enjoyed the proceedings. BBC South screened a delightfully amusing report of the contest.

The European Finals at Euromicro 80 were quite a different matter. Mice arrived from all over Europe: Midnight Sun from Finland, Lami from Switzerland, Superlite from Germany and Yamahico II from Japan. Fred now boasted a grey fur cover, a mousely leer and a singing voice like Les Dawson. Meryl was at last on autopilot and Ancomical, a new mouse from ICL, appeared in a beautiful brown furry shape which must have been envied by small children across the country when the mice appeared on *Blue Peter*.

There was an enormous of variety of technology, including a mouse built from a plastic toy car. Despite being sawn down, its three-point turns could barely get it around the corners. One mouse was built very simply from aluminium: with primitive mechanical sensors which clattered along the tops of the walls and with a

T4 and Dibley: refused to turn left.

Mr Tashiro of the Japanese Micromouse Association and also of Namco, maker of Pacman, Mario Urea of the Madrid branch of IEEE, and Professor Mariagiovanna Sami of Milan Polytechnic.

Neither school team had really qualified, but both were allowed to run for five minutes to compete for the novice trophy. Despite three changes of processor and a valiant attempt at debugging, the Welsh team could only persuade Fullyautomatix to run a short way before it crashed — again and again. Orac, however, managed at least half a corner before it abandoned maze-solving for Flamenco dancing. Clearly Orac achieved the better performance, and was awarded the novice trophy. Professor Sami said that she was especially pleased because "the little boys looked so sweet in their white CRL shirts."

T3 was the next to run, and more by luck than judgement found the centre in a time of 1 minute 13 seconds on its first run. It went on to find two other routes, but neither was faster. Superlite I had problems from the start, while Thumper babbled its way around the maze, finding a succession of routes to the centre. On its fourth run, Thumper beat T3's time by just one second, in 1 minute 12 seconds.

Now for the Finnish mouse Telu. On its first run it found the centre in 41 seconds. Six runs later, each under a minute, it achieved 31.6 seconds, which three further runs could not better. Superlite II now arrived, but met the same fate as its brother. It is especially sad that Superlite was unable to show off its cunning recognition strategy. Once it has learned the maze, it can be put down anywhere at random in any orientation, and it will find its bearings and run to the centre.

Superlite's early retirement caught Alan Dibley by surprise. T4's power supply had been interrupted, and the program had to be reloaded. Now T4 steadfastly refused to turn left, and so retired. Now it was all up to David Woodfield's Knownaim. In secret practice, Knownaim had beaten 14 seconds on the qualifying maze. Now it shot forwards along the first straight, turned the first corner — and stuck. It did it again, and then again — and all British hopes seemed lost.

Manu now arrived on the maze, bearing more than a slight resemblance to Telu. Its performance, too, was identical; for each run its time was within one second of its *alter ego*. This provoked a question which set the judges conferring: if Telu could run again as Manu, with only a change of processor board, could not Knownaim run with a change of ROM? It seemed only fair to give it five minutes, especially as Microsaurus was undergoing last-minute surgery. Knownaim reached the centre in exactly one minute — but was timed out before it could do better. Now Microsaurus was brought forth, rescued from blindness in the nick of time. But despite its promise in practice, one minute dead was the best of its four times.

So Manu/Telu carried off the $1,000 first prize, donated by Euromicro. Microsaurus won a 48K Spectrum donated by Investronica, while Knownaim ousted Thumper from third place to win £150 donated by Citema. David Woodfield was especially happy to win his mounted piece of brass cheese, one of the three winner's trophies.

The finals maze was redesigned to spread out the contestants.

jerky stepper-motor movement, the mouse was far from pretentious. This, however, was Nick Smith's Stirling Mouse, the first European champion and the first mouse to reach the centre of the maze and know that it had got there.

Following an Easter workshop meeting organised by ICL Amateur Computer Club, mice improved in leaps and bounds. At Wembley in 1981 Thumper and Thezeus appeared. Thezeus established the practice of building a mouse around a small personal computer — with the keyboard sawn off to keep it within the size limit — while Thumper combined ingenuity with craftsmanship.

In the light of experience the rules of the contest had been changed slightly to allow each mouse 15 minutes to perform. The mouse was allowed to make as many runs as it could within the time limit. To benefit mice with ingenuity and maze-learning ability, only the best time was taken into account. Thumper achieved a time of 47 seconds, Stirling Mouse 1 minute 37 seconds and Thezeus 2 minutes 27 seconds. At the 1981 European Finals, held in Paris at the Palais de le Decouverte, Thumper defeated 14 opponents to establish itself as the new European champion.

Among the competitors at the Earls Court Computer Fair for the 1982 British finals were Thezeus, Son of Thezeus and T3, all out of Alan Dibley's stable. Phil Yeardley brought Brainy Bricks, a mouse constructed from Lego. It had first appeared at the 1980 final and David Buckley brought Major Tom to join several novice mice. The two new Thezeii beat Thumper into third place — but all three times were less than one minute.

The 1982 European Finals were held at Tampere in Finland, where one of the hazards facing the contestants — and organisers — was an evening sauna, complete with the proverbial jump into a freezing lake. Eight mice battled hard for the title, snatched by a mere two seconds from T4 by the home team's Microsaurus from Tampere University of Technology in a 40-second sprint.

The contest is going from strength to strength with an increasing representation of school entries. Copenhagen is the venue for next year's European finals in August, following British finals to be held at the Computer Fair. Next year's Champion will embark on an expenses-paid trip to Japan to take part in the Japanese 1985 Mouse event. With other events planned next year for Austria and Madrid, it threatens to be a busy year.

For a set of the rules and details of contests to come, please write to John Billingsley, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Portsmouth Polytechnic, Anglesea Road, Portsmouth PO1 3DJ.

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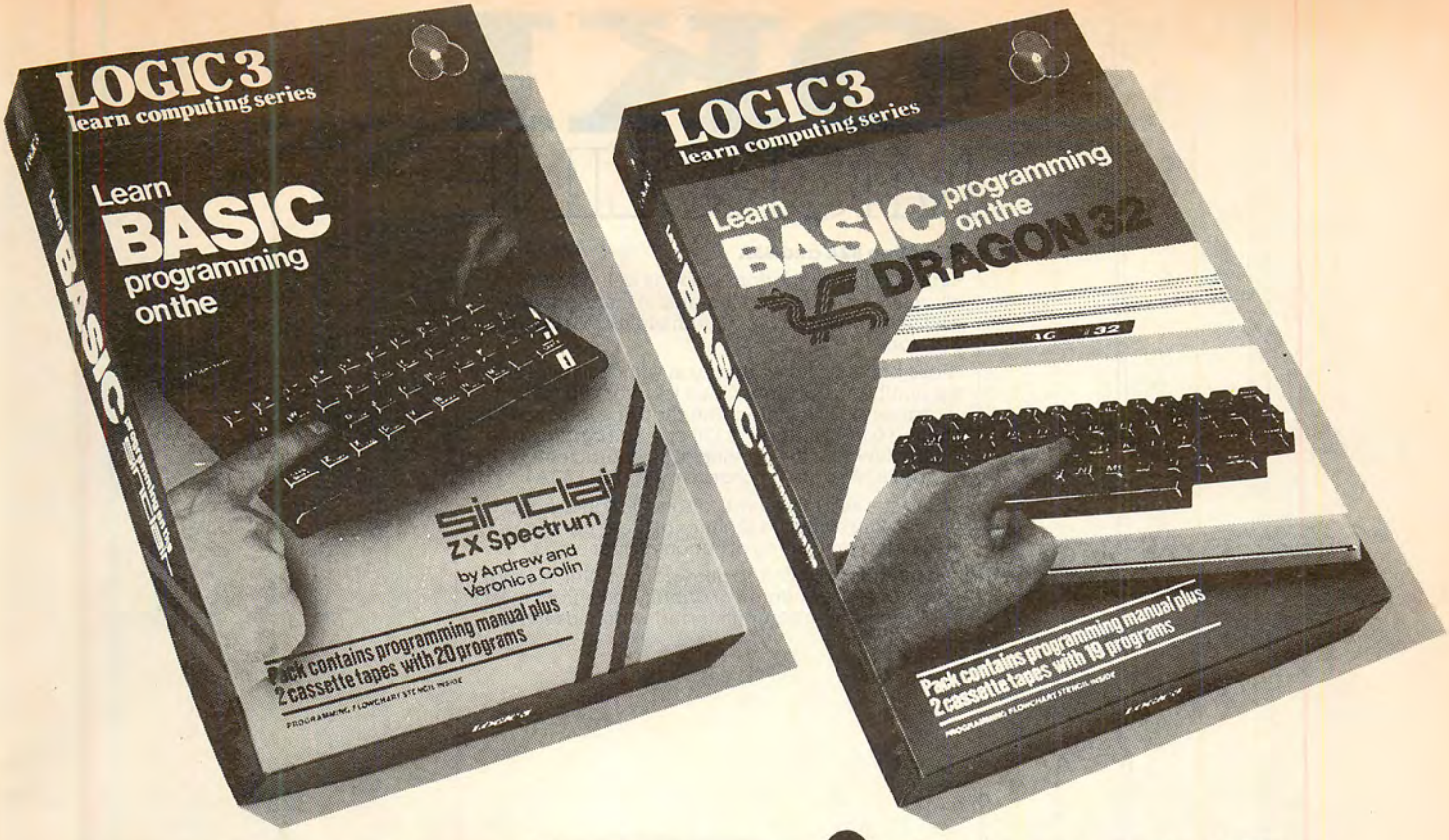

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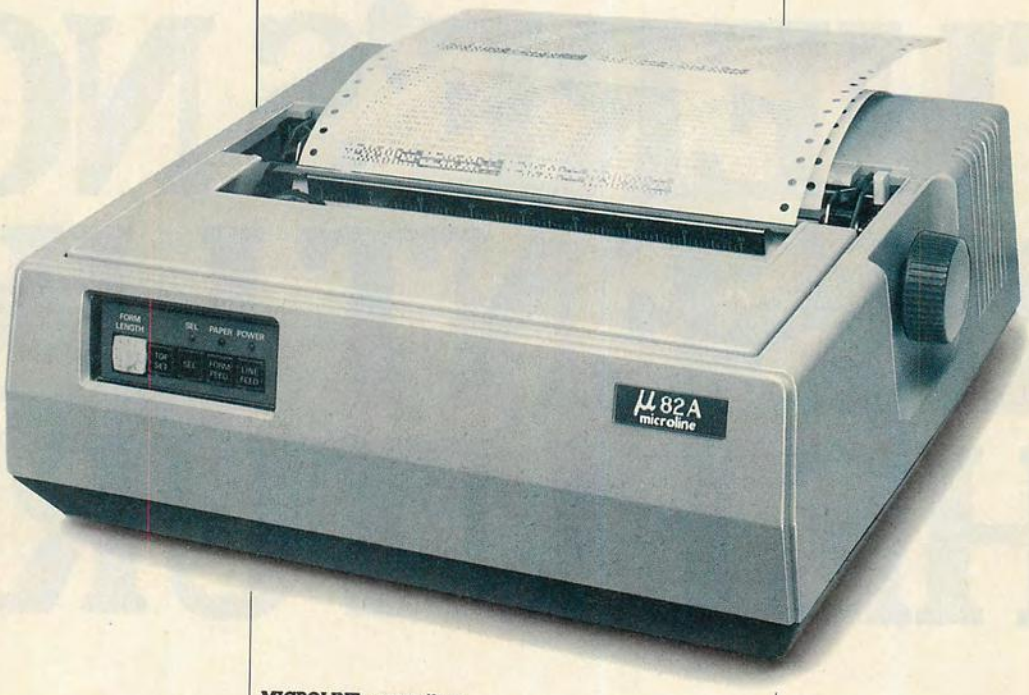

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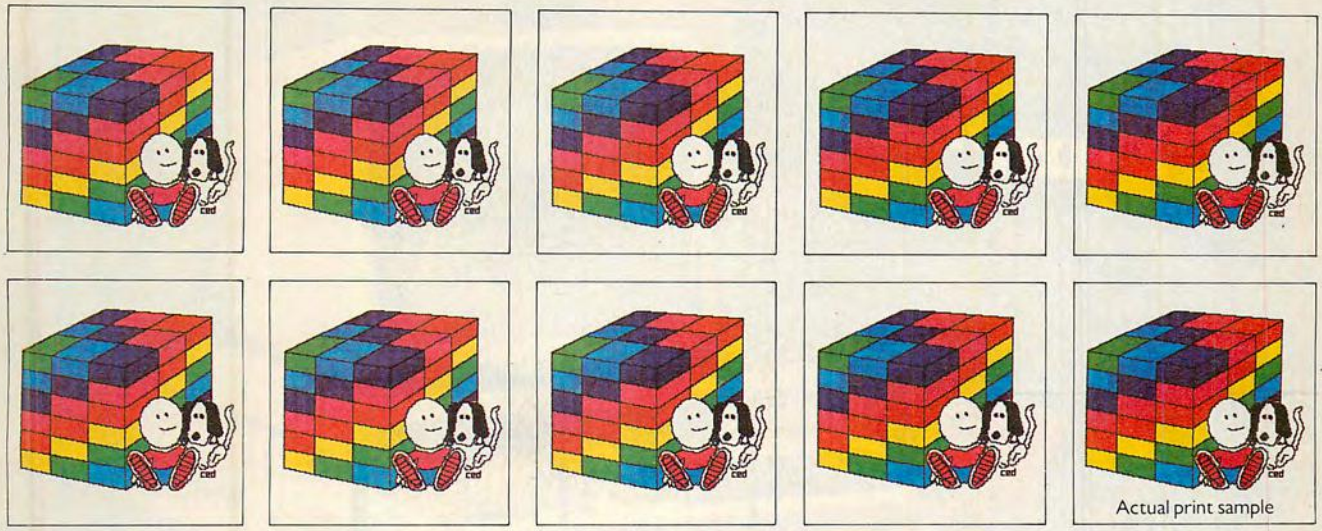

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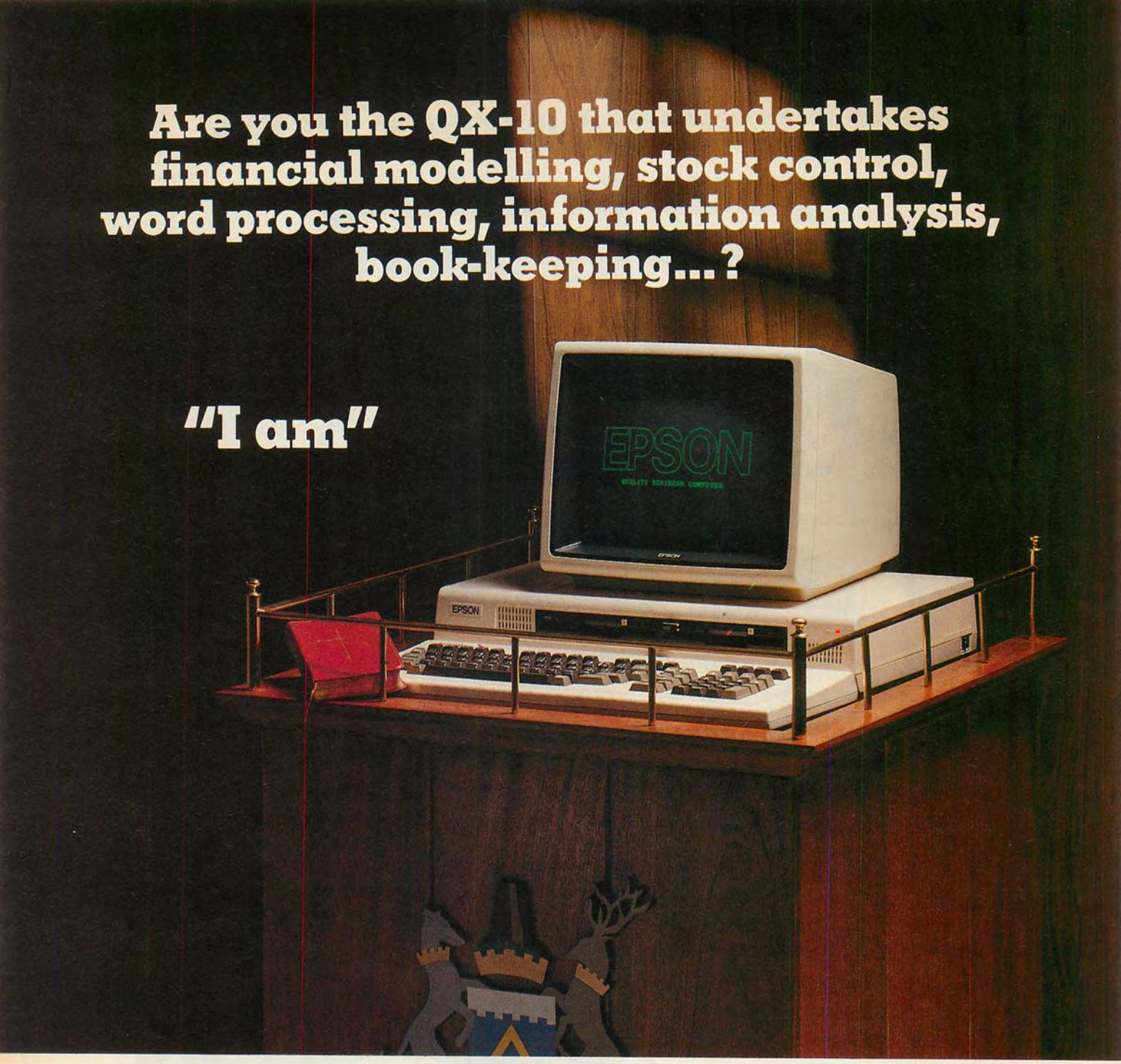

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Battle of programs

David Levy reports on the 1983 European microcomputer chess championship.

EACH YEAR SINCE 1978 there has been a chess competition held within the PCW show. The mixture of Europe's best amateur chess programs with some of the most prominent commercially available chess computers provides an excellent proving ground — a kind of annual state-of-the-art contest. The 1983 European Microcomputer Chess Championships took place in London from September 28 to October 2 at the Barbican.

The bare results of the tournament do not reveal all the excitement, frustration and tensions that were felt by most of the contestants. Watching your chess program take part in a tournament is a most nerve-racking experience. It is enormously frustrating to have to sit back and watch, knowing that your program has what should be an easy win, and see it fritter away its advantage into a draw or even a loss.

If parapsychology really works I would love to know the medium used to transmit the information. I would build an add-on for certain chess computers and beam my thought processes at them. Perhaps it will happen one day, but by then most chess programs will probably be much stronger than I am, so I will not be able to help them.

But back to the tournament. The overall winner of the event was from the amateur category. Programmers Mike Johnson and Dave Wilson brought back the super-fast hardware which had won last year's tournament. It is built around a 16-bit Advance Micro Devices bit-slice processor, working in conjunction with a 64-bit ALU, and provides approximately 80 times as much computing power as a 4MHz Z-80A.

With such an enormous start on all the other competitors it was hardly surprising that Advance 3.0 won the tournament. Yet it still had some bad moments. Advance lost its game against the Constellation, and was in losing positions in other games. But when its opponent fails to find the most accurate continuation to clinch the same Advance is very resilient and normally weathers the storm to come out on top.

If it reaches the end-game without having a totally lost position, Advance can be almost certain to outplay anything running on a conventional microprocessor. It can search the game tree much more deeply and employs special transposition tables to speed up the tree search still further. Johnson and Wilson deserved to win the tournament because theirs was clearly the strongest entry, but I cannot help feeling that hardware such as this is not entirely in the spirit of microcomputer chess tournaments. They were banned from the World Microcomputer Championships in Hungary.

The European Commercial Championship was won by Chess 2001, a magnetic sensor-board chess computer manufactured by Newcrest Technology in Hong Kong. The program in this product is a version of Cyrus 2.5, written by Richard Lang at Intelligent Software Ltd. Although it was clearly the best of the commercially available entries, Chess 2001 was not quite in the same league as Advance 3.0. When Advance had a totally lost position during the last round I had vague hopes that Chess 2001 might share first place in the tournament — but Advance eventually won its "lost" position.

One of the most interesting moments of the tournament came in 2001's last-round encounter with Caesar, when we saw what I believe is the first ever example in computer chess of *Zugzwang*. This German word describes a position in which one side is compelled to lose something, usually some material, because and only because it is its turn to move. In other words, the opponent does not threaten to win the material, but the side whose turn it is to move must make a move which throws itself on the sword. It is extremely rare for *Zugzwang* to occur in a game between human players, and this particular example will go down in the annals of computer chess.

1 — Advance 3.0, private: 7½
2 — Chess 2001, commercial: 6½
3 — Constellation, commercial: 6
4 — Cyrus 2.5, home; equal with White Knight II, home: 5½
6 — Cyrus IS Chess, home; equal with Caesar, private; and Colossus, private: 5
9 — Mephisto Experimental, commercial; equal with Spectrum Chess II, home: 4½
11 — Merlin X, private: 4
12 — Dragon Cyrus, home: 2
13 — Albatross, private: 1½
14 — Chessnut 2, private: ½

Final placings, with category and number of wins out of nine games.

In third place was another commercial entry, the new Novag Constellation. This machine was unfortunate enough to be thrashed by all three of the strongest versions of Cyrus: Chess 2001, Cyrus 2.5 running on a Sirius, and Cyrus IS Chess on a Sinclair Spectrum. Since it was the only program to defeat Advance 3.0 it fully deserved its high placing.

There was a tie for the European Home Computer Championship between Intelligent Software's Cyrus 2.5, another incarnation of Richard Lang, and BBC Software's White Knight II written by Martin Bryant. Both programs showed that it is now becoming possible to buy chess programs for some home computers that will be almost as strong as or stronger than many of the leading commercially available chess computers.

I expect the strongest dedicated chess machines to keep their edge for the next few years, partly because chess-computer manufacturers are taking advantage of the faster versions of the eight-bit microprocessors, and partly because of the inevitability of the switch to 16-bit processors in dedicated chess machines. At the same time I would expect most home computer owners in 1985 to be able to buy a £10 chess program that is more than strong enough for their needs.

Of the other competitiors in the tournament I would like to single out Caesar, which has made a great deal of progress since it last competed. This program is very much a spare-time hobby — its programmer is a pharmacist — and shows just how much can be achieved by an amateur chess programmer who goes about things in the right way. I have to say that — he took my advice back in 1979.

What can one conclude about the state of the art in microcomputer chess from the games and results of the tournament? First, despite the relative success of Caesar, it is clear that the professional chess programmers are at an enormous advantage. Although Advance was an amateur entry — that is, it did not run on a home computer and was not programmed in a commercial environment — Mike Johnson has been writing chess programs for a living since the beginning of 1979. Richard Lang, Constellation's author, Dave Kittinger, and Martin Bryant are professionally involved in chess programming.

If, as I suspect, the commercial incentives remain for another couple of years, I would still expect to see the professionals walking away with the prizes in 1984 and 1985. By then there will be so many amateur chess programmers all over the world that it will be quite possible for the big breakthrough to come from, say, a garage behind a small house in a small California town.

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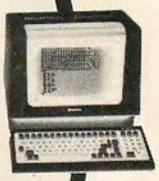

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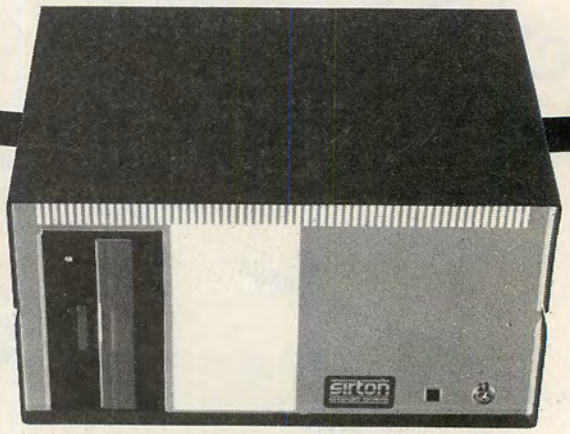

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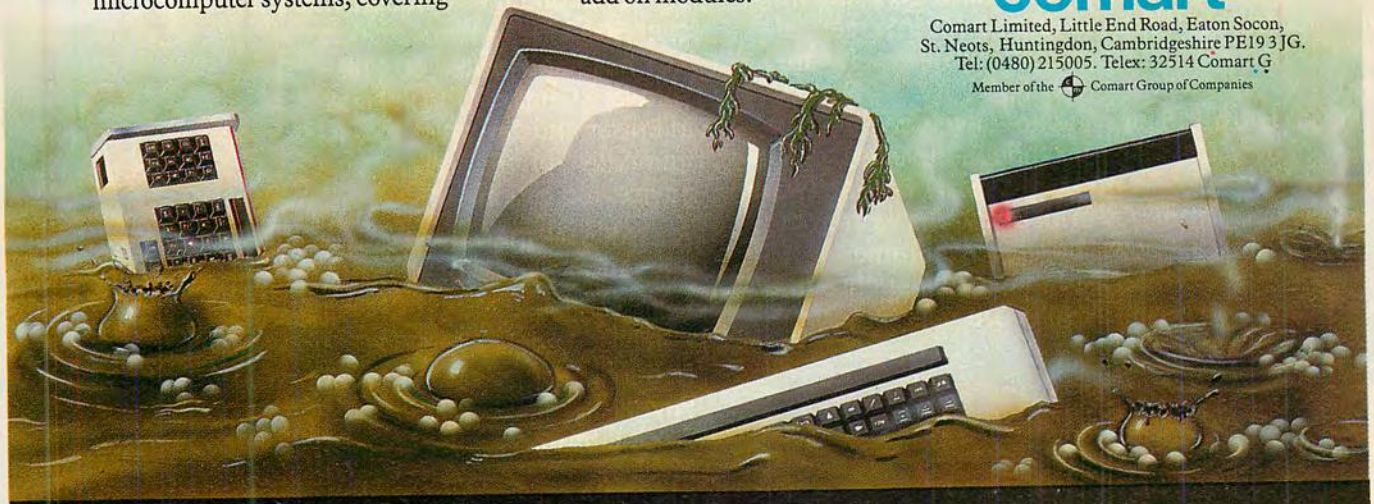

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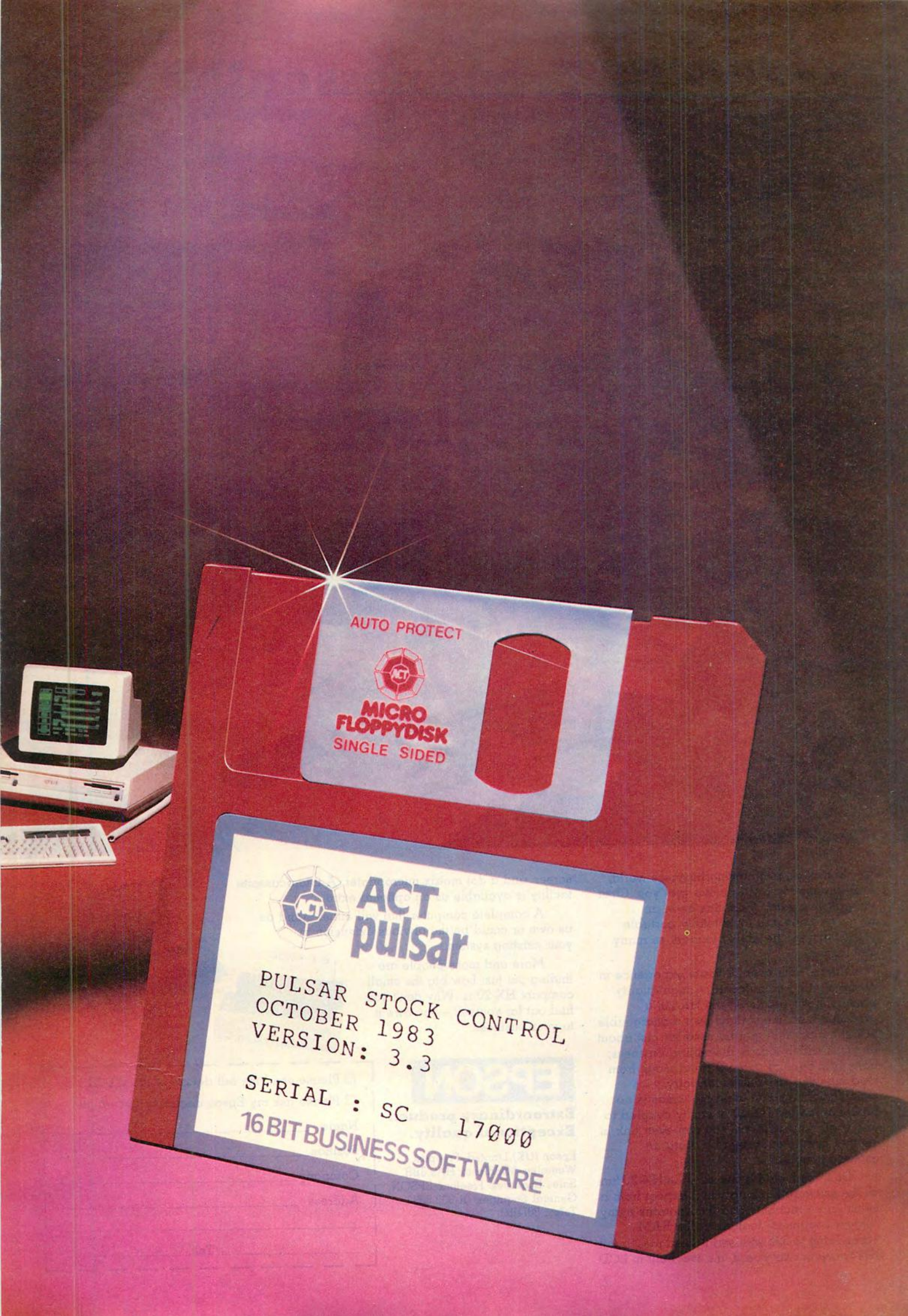
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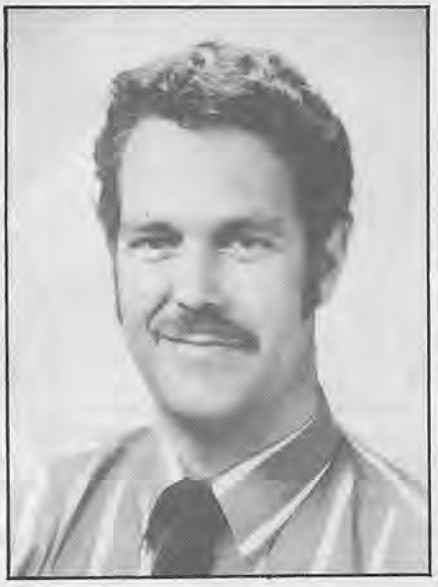

by Ray Coles

THE FIRST MICROPROCESSORS to perform like real computers rather than like calculators arrived in the mid-1970s, and are still very much with us. Prise the lid off a Spectrum, Oric or Vic-20 and inside you will find a first-generation eight-bit processor such as the Z-80 or the 6502 still going strong, despite the walking stick.

Eight-bit processors are now in the mature phase of their life, which means that they are available by the truck load at very reasonable prices. They have long since stopped drawing gasps of admiration from would-be system designers, who now have their fickle eyes riveted on the sexier 16-bit devices like the Intel 8086, the Zilog Z-8000 and the Motorola 68000.

There are already many up-market personal computers available, such as the IBM PC and the ACT Sirius, which use the newer 16-bit technology. In both these cases the chip is an Intel 8088 which has a 16-bit processor on the inside behaving like an eight-bit device on the outside to reduce memory costs. Also becoming available are systems based on true 16-bit processors such as the Apple Lisa, which uses the Motorola 68000 device.

Unlike the Intel 8086, the Motorola device was designed from the outset to have an internal 32-bit register set and architecture while retaining a 16-bit memory interface to reduce packaging problems and to enable it to compete with the lower-cost Intel and Zilog designs. With the promise of 256K RAM chips just around the corner, however, the time has come for the 68000 to emerge from its chrysalis and assume the full glory of its 32-bit inheritance. 1984 is going to be the year of the 32-bit processor, and systems designers are already going goggle-eyed at the prospect of all the goodies shortly to be unveiled by the chip manufacturers.

It will, of course, be some time before Sinclair Research comes up with a 32-bit home micro with a cardboard Winchester and a 2Mbyte add-on RAM pack. But we can expect other manufacturers to have higher-priced systems available from 1985 onwards. What amazing systems they will be! They will offer more power than a Vax minicomputer in a desk-top package costing a fraction of the current Vax price, and with graphics and software which will make your mouth water.

Four manufacturers have already announced their 32-bit plans. Next year is going to see a tussle for market leadership in this prestige area, with some interesting changes compared with the previous contests for eight- and 16-bit leadership. In the past Intel has always been first in the field. Zilog and Motorola generally followed shortly afterwards with technically superior devices, one of which has gone on to be at least as successful as the early-bird Intel.

In the 32-bit stakes, however, the order has been reversed. A rank outsider, National Semiconductor, has already announced the launch of its 32032 device. Motorola and Zilog are to follow close behind in early 1984, with Intel rather surprisingly bringing up the rear with a late-84 launch for its iAPX386. It is true that Intel already has a 32-bit processor, the iAPX432, but this low-profile device is not likely to be a direct competitor in the mass market. One cannot help wondering whether Intel knows something that the others don't.

National will be first thanks to a late launch for its 16032 16-bit design which was, like the Motorola 68000, designed to have a 32-bit internal architecture. With a 16Mbyte address range, built-in memory management and floating-point co-processor, and an elegant and powerful instruction set, the 32032 is a mighty beast indeed.

The latest silicon processing techniques have been used to squeeze the 100,000-plus transistors required on to a small die which fits inside a 60-pin package. Software writers will flip at the prospect of being able to use any data type or addressing mode with any of the basic instructions. Early reports suggest that the 32032 can run high-level compiled languages such as Fortran at the same speed as an equivalent machine-code program.

Early in the new year we will witness the launch of the Motorola 68020, a souped-up full-width 68000 with lots of new instructions and an amazing 256Mbyte address range. The 68020 will use CMOS technology to reduce power consumption to just 1.8 watts while running from a 16MHz clock and achieving 1.5 million instructions per second.

Another innovation will be an on-chip instruction cache which will speed up program execution by reducing the time spent in accessing slower system memory. Since most program code runs in a sequential fashion, the fast cache memory can speed things up by being filled a block at a time. In most situations a cache hit-rate of greater than 90 percent can be expected.

Zilog is due to launch the Z-80000 later in the year, but has already released full details of the nought-bound monster following in the footsteps of the Z-8, Z-80, Z-800 and Z-8000 already with us. Like the National and Motorola devices the Z-80000 prides itself on having instruction-set compatibility with its 16-bit predecessor.

As usual, Zilog has gone for speed, with clock rates up to 25MHz promised and a throughput of up to 5,000,000 instructions per second. Unlike Motorola, Zilog has incorporated cache memory for both data and instructions, and 16 cache blocks each 16 words deep are available on the chip. Also on the chip is a built-in memory-management unit which provides for virtual-memory operation and sophisticated protection mechanisms.

Finally we will be offered the long-awaited iAPX386 from Intel. It was first announced over two years ago but is unlikely to see the light of day until late 1984. The 386 will double the throughput of Intel's current top-of-the-line 16-bit processor, the iAPX286, and will use a closely related architecture which can be traced back to the 8086.

The architecture of the 8086 has always seemed rather messy to me, and it is difficult to see how Intel can hope to compete with the offerings of the other three manufacturers which will be first — as well as best — this time round. Yet the Intel bandwagon has a big following which wants more than just sexy chips, and no one has yet been able to challenge Intel in the software and hardware support offered to designers.

So there it is, the 32-bit era is about to dawn. But don't put your trusty eight-bit crate out to grass just yet. It will be quite some time before we see the first 32-bit personal computer advertised — even in this magazine!

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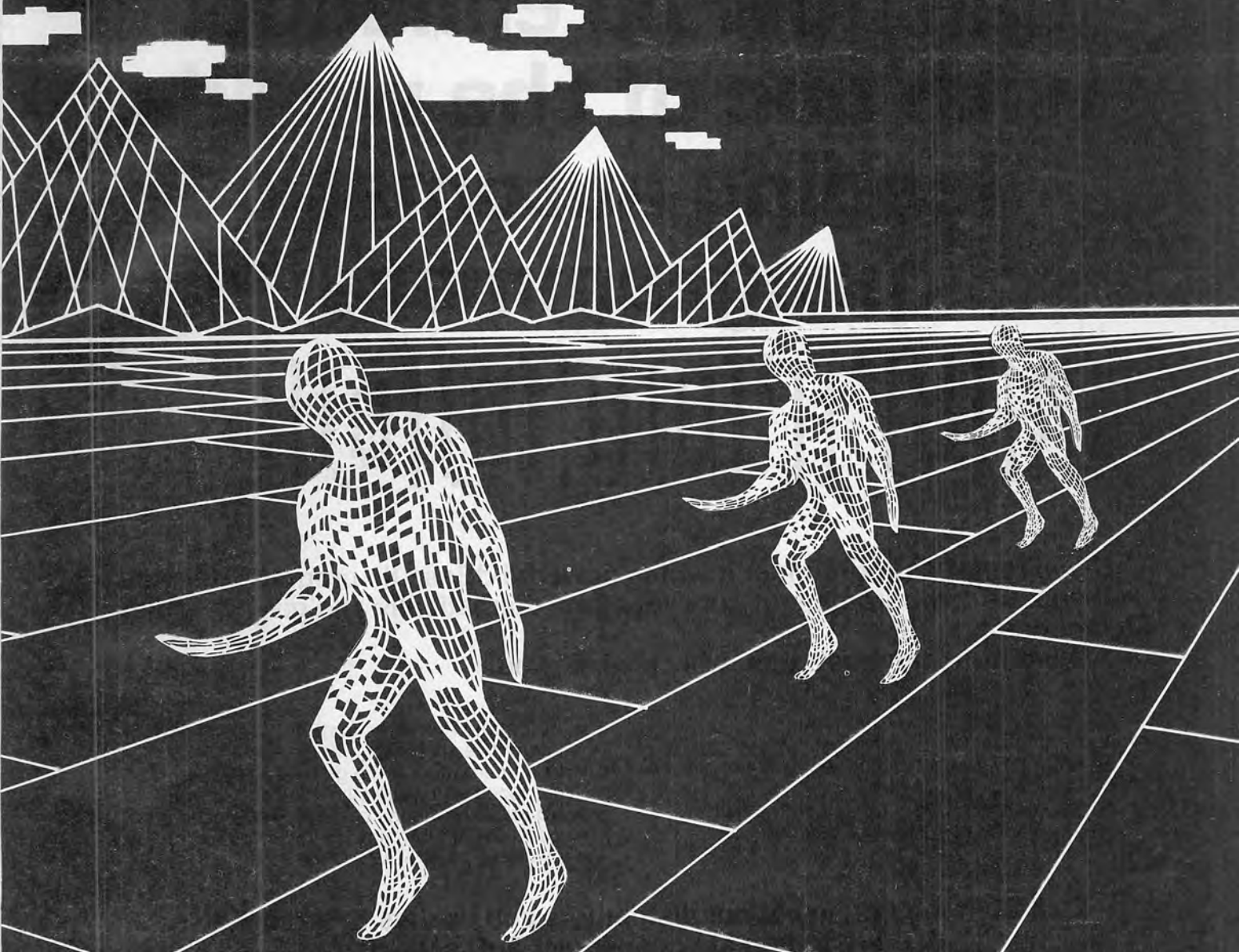

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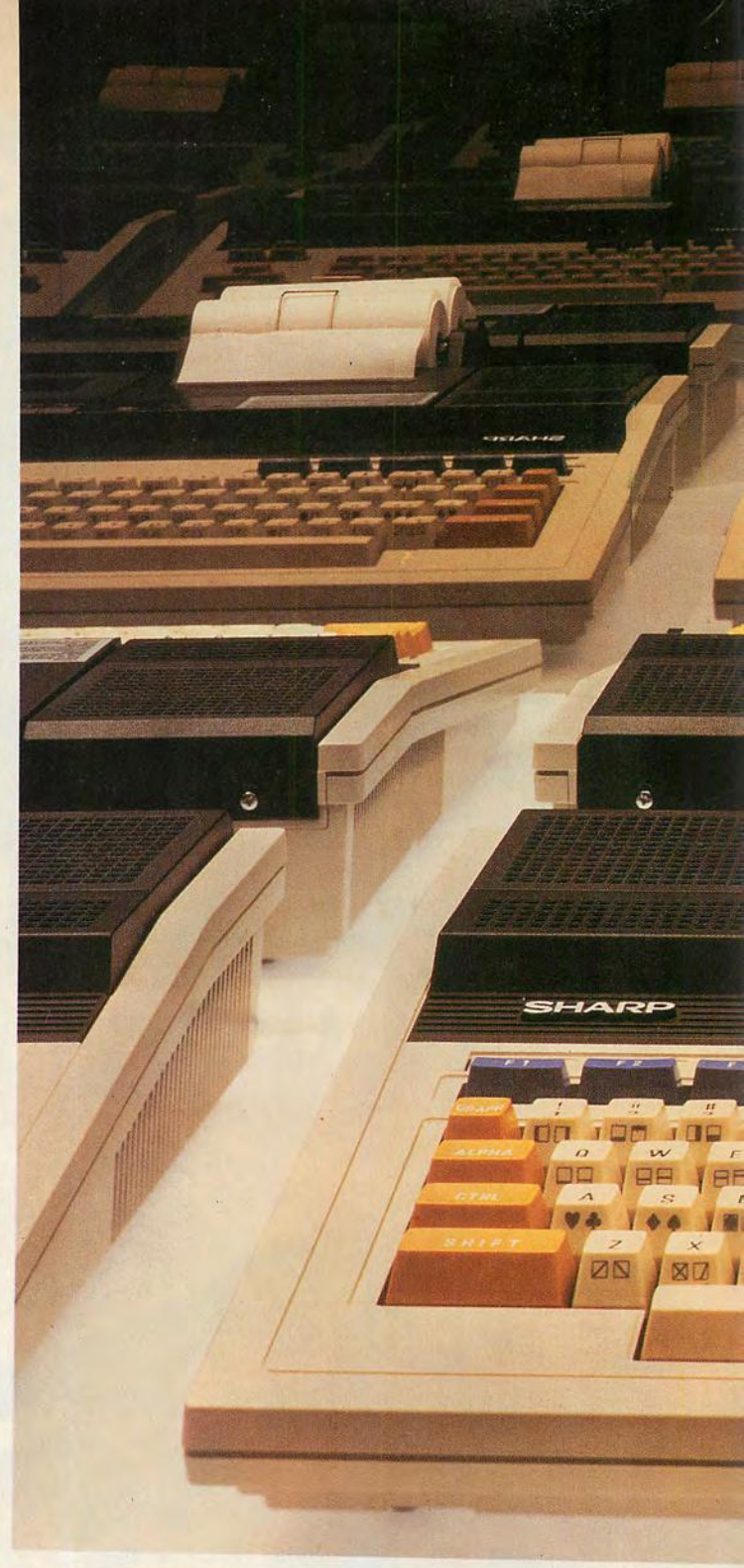

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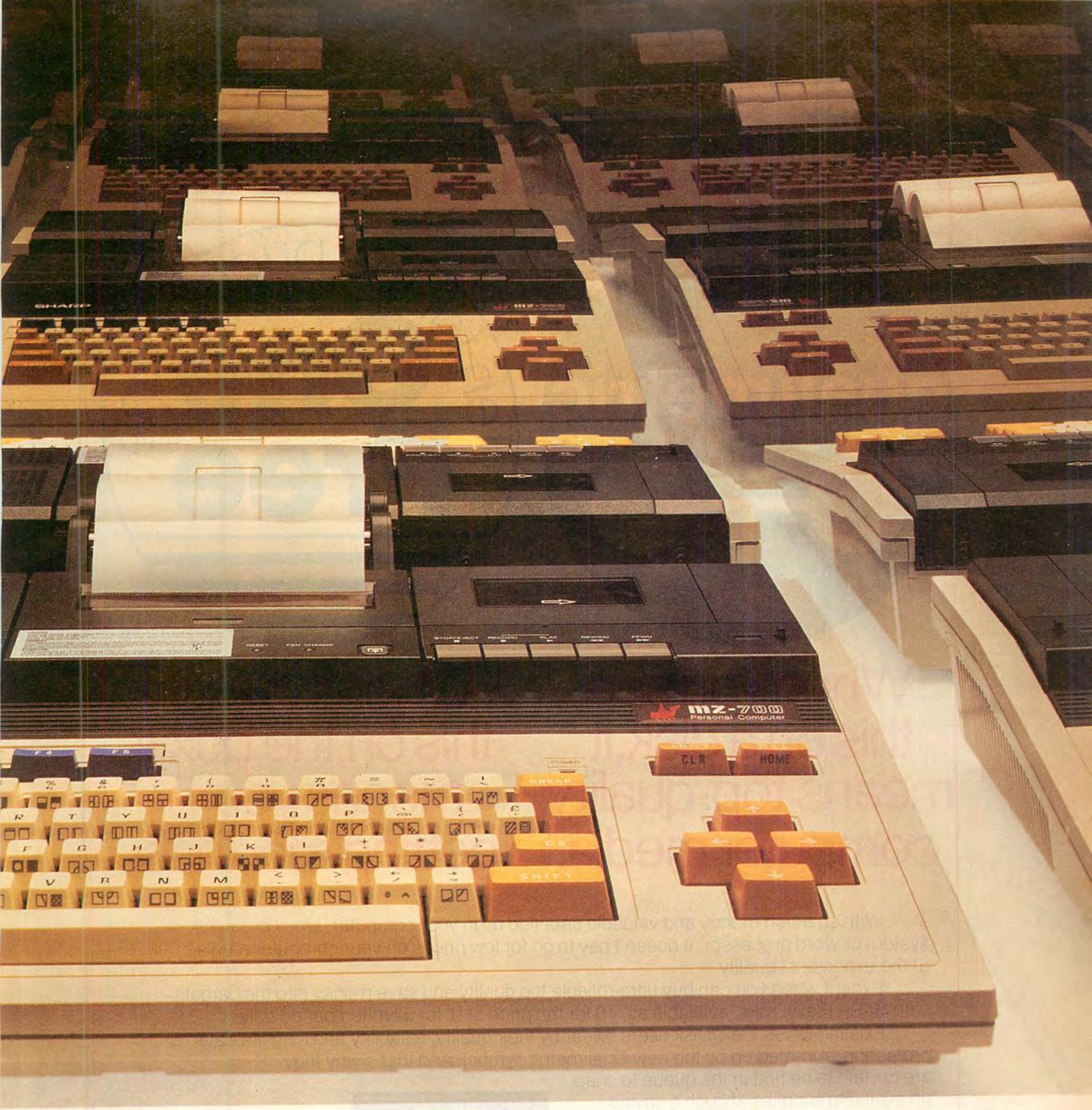

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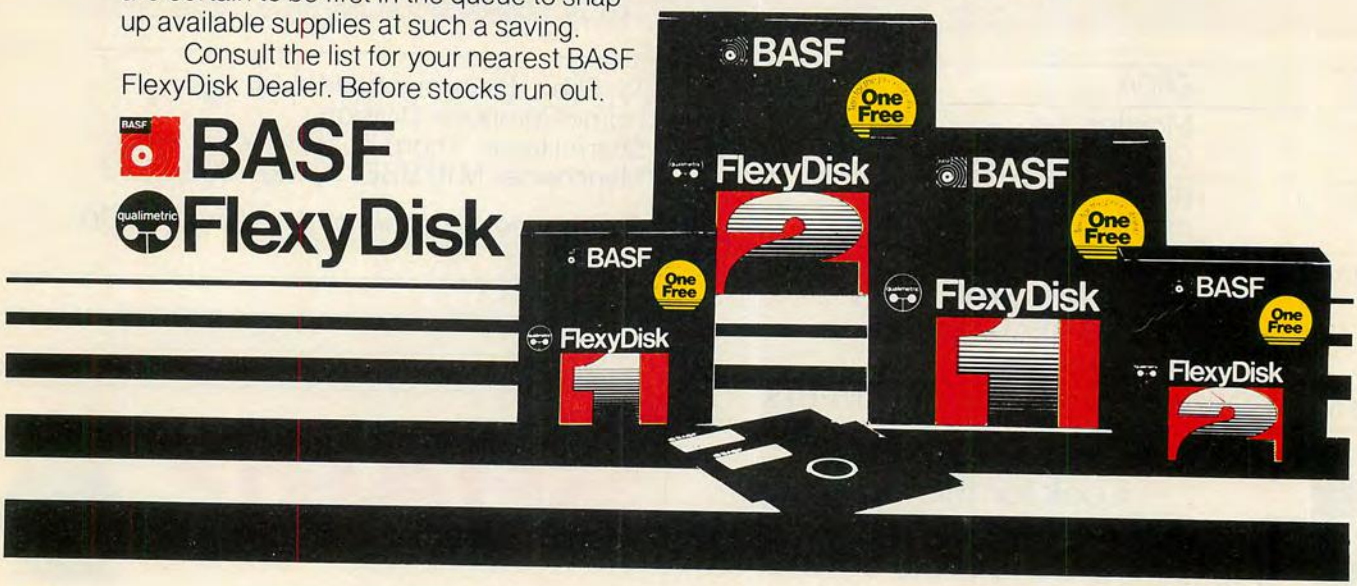

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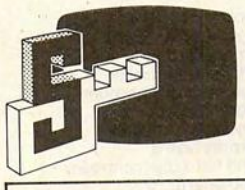

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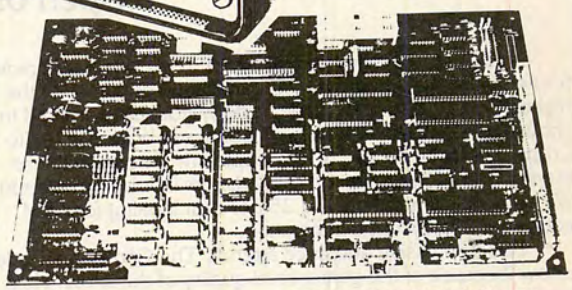

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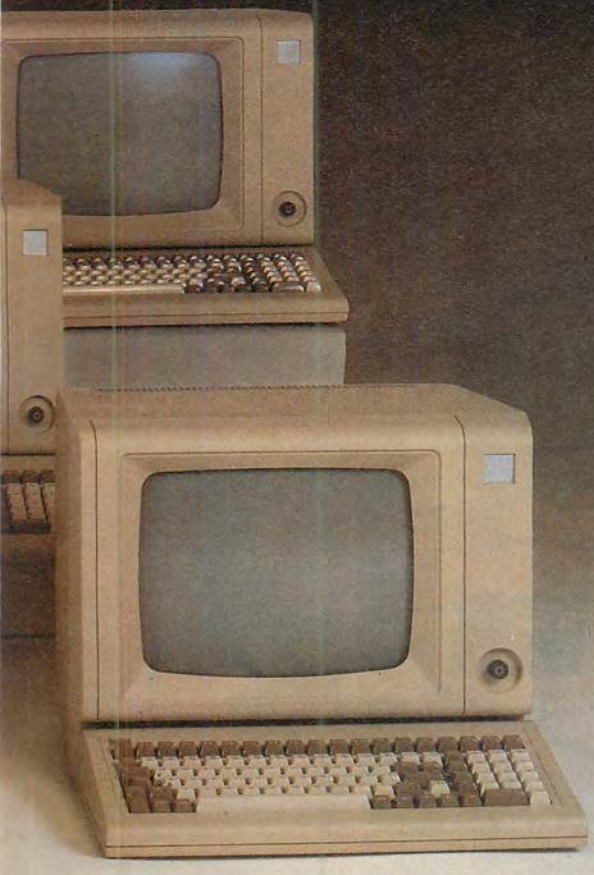

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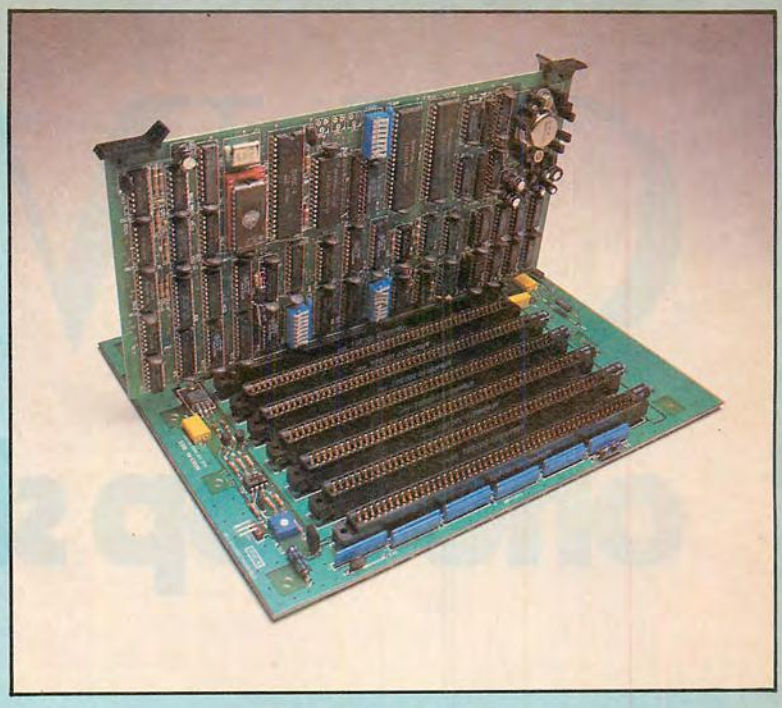

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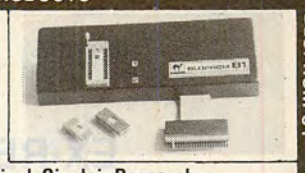

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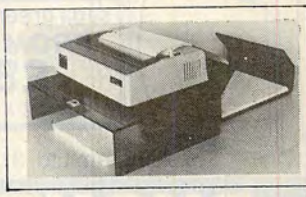

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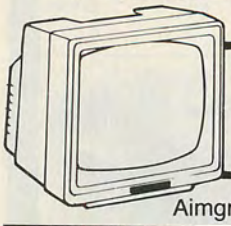

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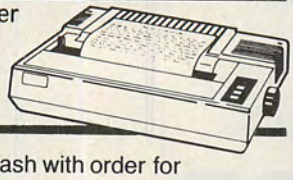

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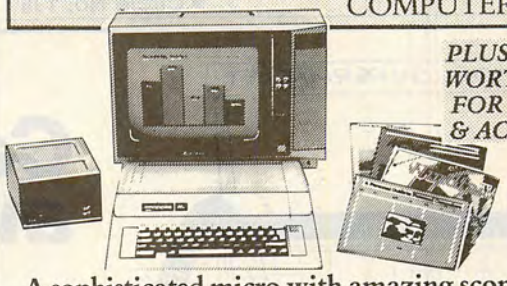

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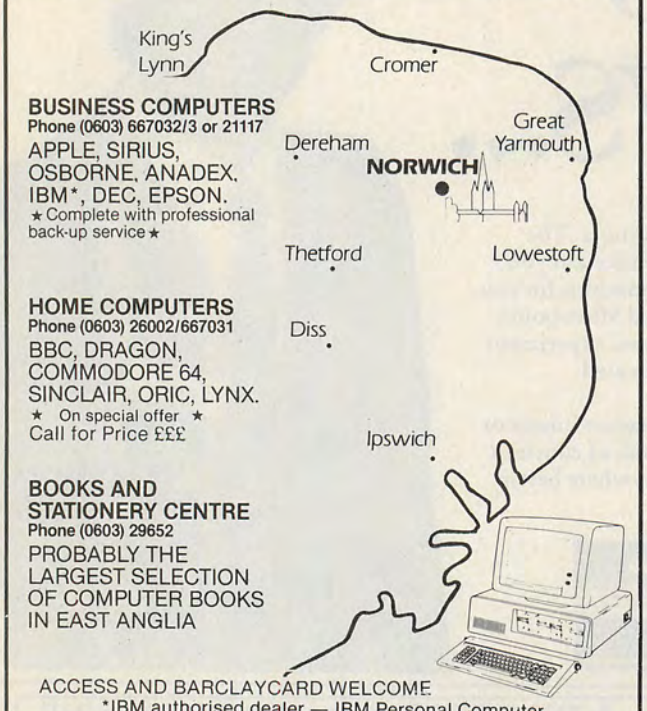

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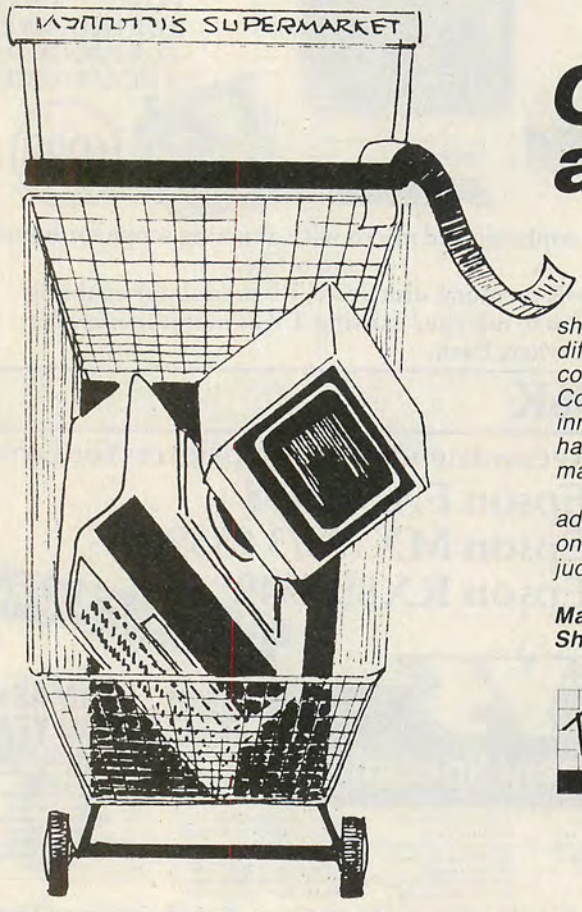

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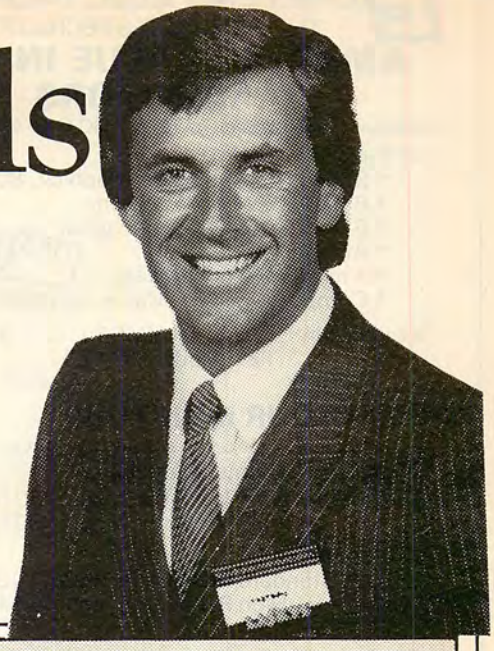

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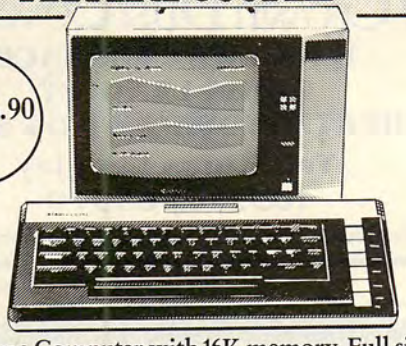

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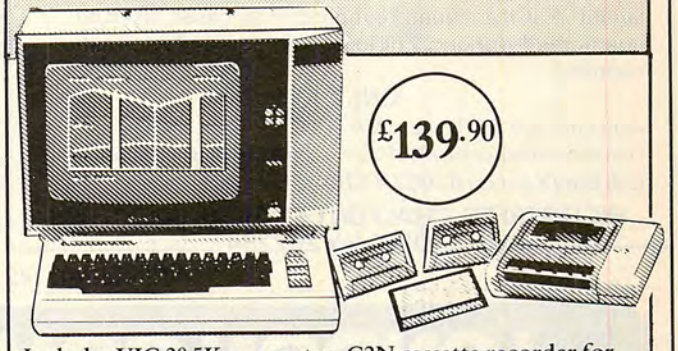

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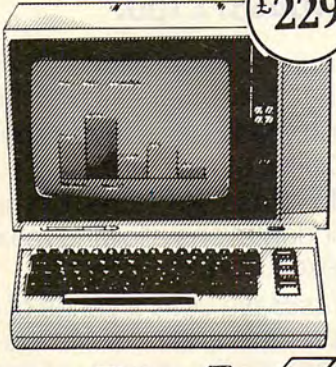

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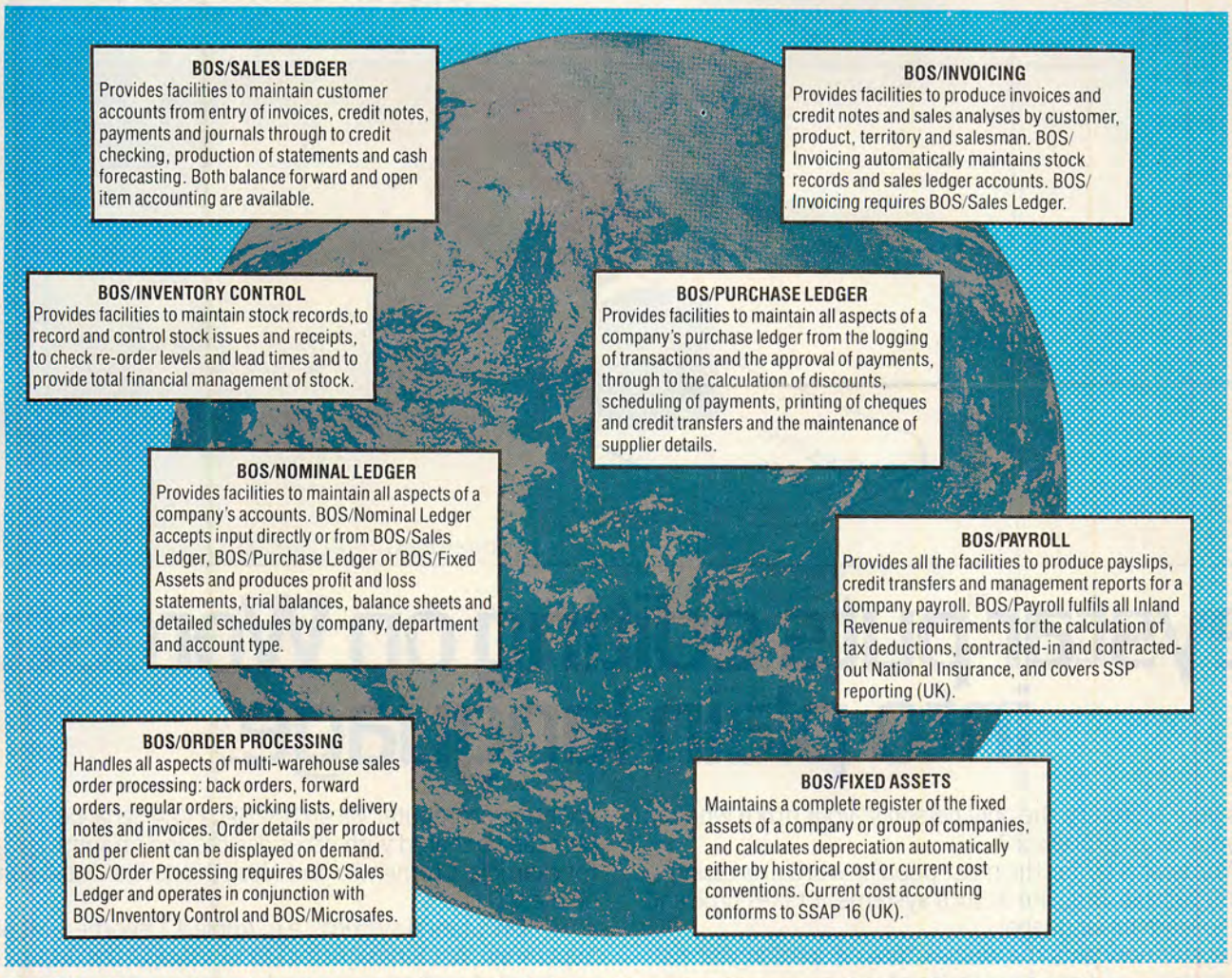

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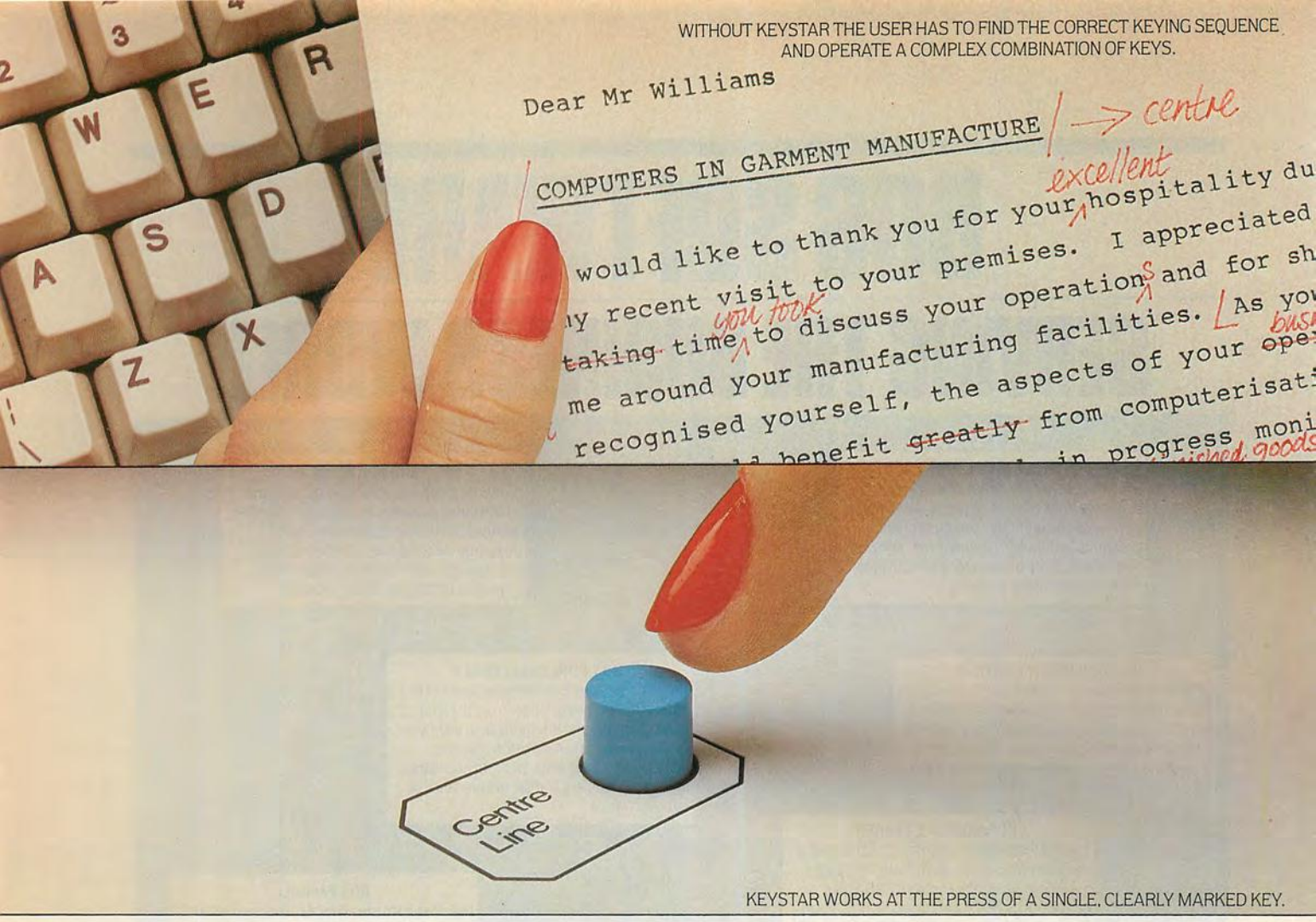
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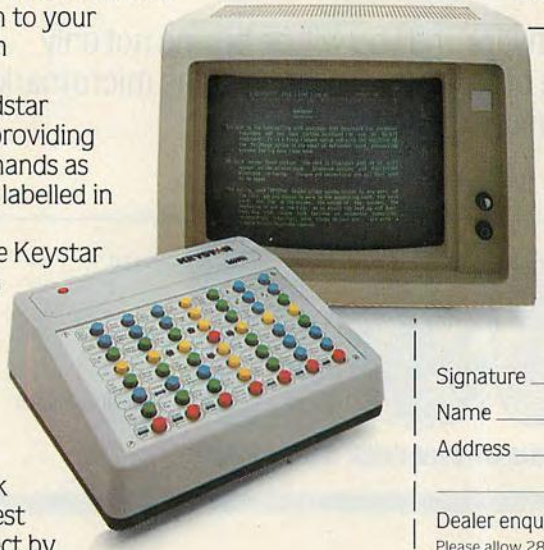
For the technically minded, Keystar connects easily to your microcomputer via an RS232C/V24 serial port. This port can be shared with other devices and on some systems, for example, Cromemco and Altos the device would naturally be the V.D.U.

On integral systems, e.g. Apple II, Osborne, RML380Z, Superbrain, Act Sirius/Victor 9000, IBM PC, the device could be a printer, a plotter or a modem and special instructions are provided to direct Wordstar to recognise the presence of Keystar on such systems.



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Plan 2000 network

ZYNAR, already well known for networking Apples, has launched Plan 2000 to network IBM PCs, as long as at least one of them is the XT. This hard-disc model provides 10Mbyte of storage to be shared by all the PCs on the network. The system is based on the well proven Arcnet system pioneered by Datapoint and also used by the new LSI Octopus, as well as Tandy, Wang and Zenith. The Plan 2000 development has, however, been done in the U.K., partially funded by a grant from the Department of Industry under the MAP project-support scheme.

The Plan 2000 starter system includes a card each for two PCs, plus the coaxial cable to link them together, and this costs £1,475. Further PCs can then be added at a cost of £475 each, up to a maximum total of 255 work stations.

Before this level is reached, however, the system will have been upgraded to the Plan 4000, with a 137Mbyte hard disc as a file server. Plan 4000 has been on sale since January, and supports Apples too.

The network allows PCs to swap files or data, send electronic mail, and share system resources such as hard discs, printers, telex and modem links.

Contact Zynar Ltd, 122/3 High Street, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 1JT. Telephone: Uxbridge (0895) 59831.

PC Flashes

- **Landsoft** has upgraded its popular payroll package for the Commodore to Payroll 3 for the IBM PC. Telephone: 01-878 7044/7.
- **Pete & Pam** is now importing Type Faces, a program from the Alpha Software Corporation of Burlington, Mass, which provides 15 type styles on the Apple II and IBM PC. The program supports Epson MX and IDS printers and costs £99 plus VAT. Telephone: Rossendale (0706) 227011.
- **Simon Computers Ltd** sells add-on cards for the Apple II and Sirius 1. Now Simon has a RAM expansion board with an asynchronous serial port for the IBM PC. Prices are from £180 for 64K to £305 for 256K, plus VAT in each case. Telephone: 01-680 4646.
- **Aptec,** Appropriate Technology Ltd, has enhanced and expanded its bilingual Arabic/English software. Arabstar 2 is Aptec's enhanced word-processing package. Arabforms for forms generation and a relational database called Arabdbase, have been added. Telephone: 01-328 7272.

Big Blue's profits up 25 percent

IBM MADE $1.3 billion profit on turnover of $9.4 billion during the third quarter of 1983, ending 30 September, according to chairman John Opel. This was mainly due to soaring hardware sales of $5.29 billion, up 40 percent on the same period last year. IBM's rental earnings, however, were down by nearly 20 percent. Massive sales of the PC in America must also have been a factor. These figures translate into £867 million profit on £3,527 million sales in real money.

Graphics card

THE STANDARD IBM PC comes with a monochrome card and printer, which can be a little tricky if you want to run a program using colour graphics. Reflex Ltd has the answer in the form of the Hercules graphics card. It replaces the mono card and allows colour graphics to be displayed — in mono, of course — on the standard monochrome screen. Thus it becomes possible to use the facilities of programs like Lotus 123 and Supercalc-3 without splashing out on a colour monitor. The mono Hercules costs £395.

Contact Reflex Ltd, Wellington Industrial Estate, Basingstoke Road, Spencers Wood, Reading RG7 1AW. Telephone: Reading (0734) 884611.

Making a connection

IN 1981 a company called The Legal Connection merged with Fountain Management Services to form The Professional Connection. Fountain had Trial — Time Recording and Integrated Accounting for Lawyers — to run on IBM minis, and the new company started distributing software for the IBM Displaywriter too. Now it has added an IBM PC connection.

The Professional Connection claims exclusive distribution rights for Dataease, an IBM PC database which is part of the "-ease" series from Software Solutions Inc. Dataease requires 128K of RAM and costs £450.

Another Professional Connection package is the word processor Palantir, from Designer Software. It is easy to use, includes mailing facilities and costs £240.

Also in the catalogue are the Easy series from Information Unlimited; the Chang Laboratories range of Docuplan, Memoplan, Microplan, Graphplan, Dataplan and Fileplan, plus the usual Peachtree and Visi ranges.

Hardware available includes a mouse plus the Big D disc drive. The 8in. drive is designed to run alongside the IBM PC's 5.25in. floppy, so you can transfer files to the smaller format. That could be useful if you have an IBM Displaywriter, 4300, System 38 or 34 or 23 or similar, but with a price of £1,495 it is not a toy.

The Personal Computer Connection, part of The Professional Connection, is at the Old Manor House, Wickham Road, Fareham, Hampshire PO16 7AR. Telephone: Fareham (0329) 230870 or 239025.

IBM Robots

IBM (UK) has announced two high-precision robotic systems that can be programmed using the PC. Each has a servo-controlled, jointed arm. Programing is done in the AML/Entry Version 2 programming language. The robots cost £21,559 and £27,399 and are built in Tokyo by Sankyo Seiki.

MICROSOFT WORD

Even without a mouse, this package has plenty to teach the others; with one, Chris Bidmead found it was like a month of birthdays.

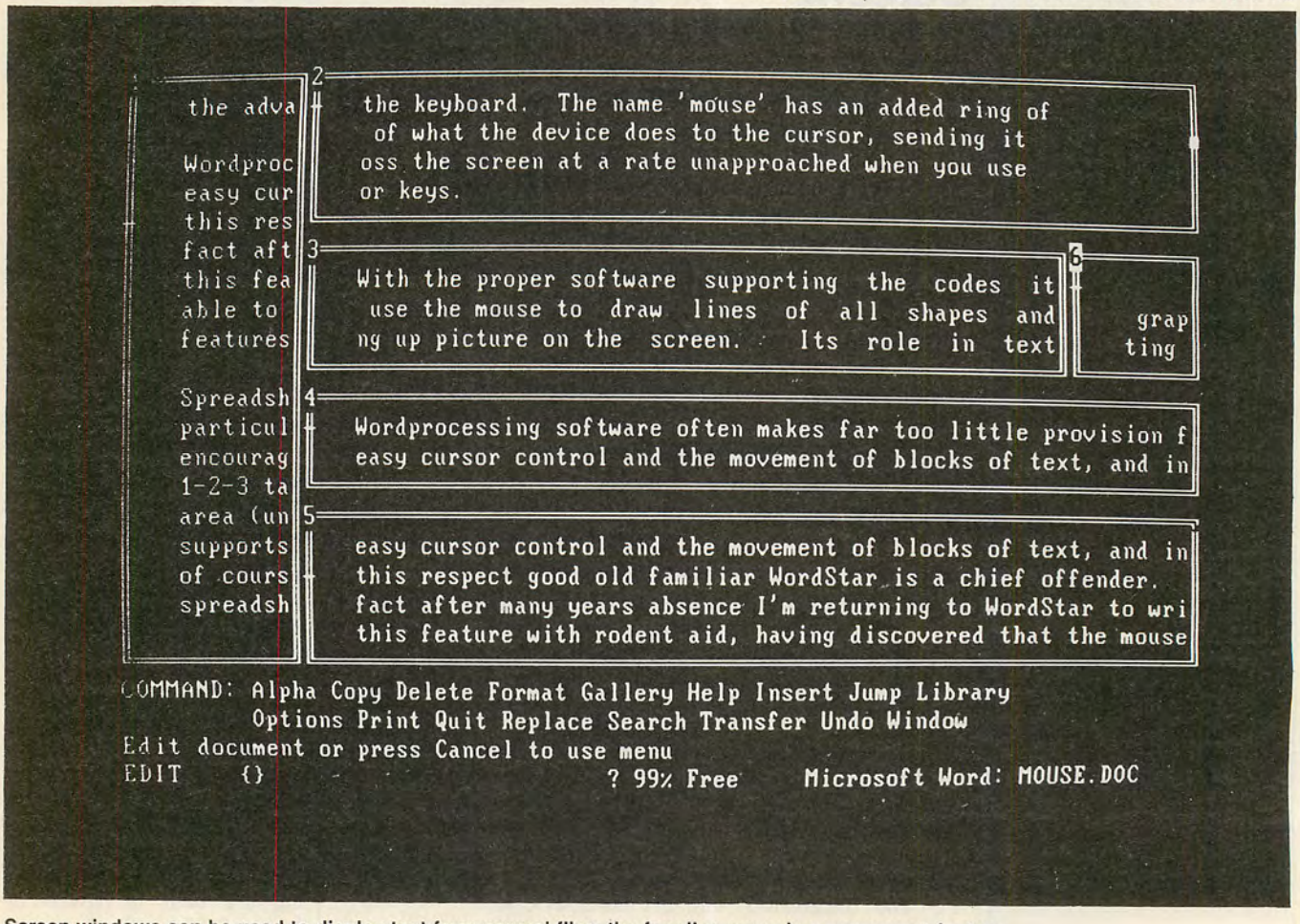
WORDSTAR, Memorite, Wangwriter, Perfect Writer, Peachtext, Spellbinder and similar extensions to journalistic fingertips have been pretty thoroughly digested in this office over the years, so excitement over a new word-processing package is rare. But I am euphoric about Word — also rather clumsily known as Multi-Tool Word — the latest fruit of the current 16-bit burst of creativity by Bill Gates and his team at the Microsoft Corporation of Belleveue, Washington.

Here is a deep-down, thoroughly designed package. It has a smooth and presentable user interface that will not frighten away beginners, but concealing an array of dazzling functions that can be unfolded one by one in the user's own time, like a month of birthdays. Word looks like being the writing aid that we writers, journalists, typists, managers and all have been waiting for ever since micros became affordable.

You will find some criticisms in the eulogy that follows, criticisms expressed as disappointments. Take them as a compliment to the package. It is so good it deserves to be better. And bear in mind that what I looked at was the Beta test version of the software.

Word is superficially a WYSIWYG word-processing system — what you see is what you get. It is a school of thought exemplified — though far from perfectly — in good old reliable WordStar. In WYSIWYG word processors the display on the screen shows more or less how you can expect to see the text when it is printed out. This is certainly true of Word. But internally Microsoft's new offering incorporates many of the features of a diametrically different approach known as Emacs.

One of the driving ideas behind the Emacs word-processing system, originally developed at the MIT artificial-intelligence lab, is that what appears on the screen is important only in respect of its content. Formatting is a function of printing, and should not bother the head of the programmer or creative writer using the package. His or her primary concern is to get around the text quickly, access and edit several texts at the same time, and generally treat the screen as if it were an electronic desk top on which papers can be shuffled. Later, when the time comes to produce hard copy, format codes embedded in the text will make calls on a library of ready-made formatting instructions, guiding the layout with no further human intervention.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Wordprocessing software often makes far too little provision f
easy cursor control and the movement of blocks of text, and in
5
easy cursor control and the movement of blocks of text, and in
this respect good old familiar WordStar is a chief offender.
fact after many years absence I'm returning to WordStar to wri
this feature with rodent aid, having discovered that the mouse
COMMAND: Alpha Copy Delete Format Gallery Help Insert Jump Library
Options Print Quit Replace Search Transfer Undo Window
Edit document or press Cancel to use menu
EDIT {}
? 99% Free
Microsoft Word: MOUSE.DOC

Screen windows can be used to display text from several files; the four-line menu is a permenant feature.

The Emacs philosophy has many advantages for the experienced user, but is hard to sell to newcomers, who find the "glass typewriter" aspects of WYSIWYG software more instantly reassuring. But in going the WordStar route they sacrifice:

- The facility to alter the entire file format quickly and simply by changing the style instruction at the head of the text.
- The ability to move around the text, and move the text around, in logical increments of character, word, sentence, paragraph, rather than the physical increments of row, column and screen.
- The opportunity to work on more than one file at the same time.

Emacs offers all this and more. Now Word has it too — libraries of format styles, multiple buffers, the lot — but bundled cleverly into the lower reaches of the software where the complexity will not interfere with the beginner's sense of control over the package.

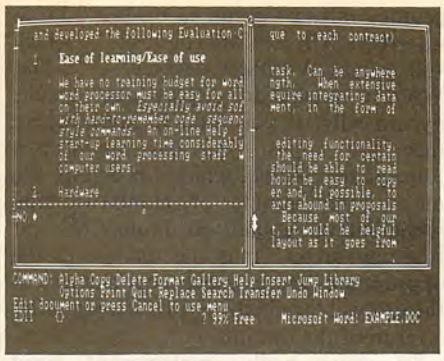
When you first bring up Word a bordered window appears, occupying most of the screen but leaving four lines at the bottom for the menu. The window is empty except for a cursor positioned in the top left-hand corner. The cursor appears to have a hollowed-out diamond in the centre, but in fact the diamond is the end-of-text marker, a separate symbol overlaid at the moment by the cursor.

You type in the text as you would on a typewriter. Automatic word wrap takes care of line endings, and you only need hit Return when you get to the end of the paragraph. Elementary correction works as you might expect, with the Backspace key wiping out text as the cursor moves to the left. When the screen fills, a very fast scroll clears it and puts the last few lines at the top.

Simple editing is almost as easy, using the cursor keys supplemented by the Page Up and Page Down keys to go back to mistakes. WordStar and Word both sensibly forbid the cursor to stray outside the area of text but, in a welcome departure from WordStar's cursor handling, the Word cursor travels intelligently up and down, tucking in towards the left margin to follow short lines, but remembering its original column when line length permits.

By default the editor is in insert mode, so text to be replaced has to be deleted first, using the standard Delete key. If inserted characters increase the length of any line beyond the margins readjustment of the paragraph takes place automatically. You do not have to tidy edited paragraphs manually, as in WordStar.

Up to this point the system behaves like a super-typewriter, and there is nothing to alarm the moderately experienced typist. If you have already used word processors like WordStar moving, deleting and copying blocks of text should raise no difficulties either as it is actually simpler. Instead of visible block markers, Word appears to stretch the cursor to highlight the area of text you are selecting. Delineating a logical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COMMAND: Alpha Copy Delete Format Gallery Help Insert Jump Library
Options Print Quit Replace Search Transfer Undo Window
Edit document or press Cancel to use menu
EDIT
99% Free
Microsoft Word: EXAMPLE.DOC

Horizontal bars show where windows fall.

and developed the following Evaluation Criteria.
1. Ease of learning/Ease of use
We have no training budget for word processing. The
word processor must be easy for all personnel to learn
on their own. Especially avoid software that operates
with hard-to-remember cryptic sequences or compressed-
style commands. An on-line Help facility would aid
start-up learning time considerably. Remember several
of our word processing staff will be first-time
computer users.
2. Hardware
We will be using the IBM Personal Computers with MS-DOS
to run the word processing software. The wp we select
should not require any hardware or operating system
modifications. We will be adding the Microsoft Mouse
COMMAND: Alpha Copy Delete Format Gallery Help Insert Jump Library
Options Print Quit Replace Search Transfer Undo Window
Edit document or press Cancel to use menu
EDIT
99% Free
Microsoft Word: EXAMPLE.DOC

The mouse adds an extra cursor.

unit of text — a word, a sentence or a paragraph — is even simpler as an IBM function key is set aside for each function.

Unlike WordStar, Word does not lose deleted text. Instead it is sent to a special buffer area called Scrap, from which it can be recalled simply by hitting the Insert key. This elegant idea imported from Emacs means that there is no essential difference between deleting and shifting text around.

The same concept is extended naturally to create a glossary function. Instead of the default deletion to Scrap you can slice away sections of text and store them in named buffers for instant recall later. So instead of having to type

Yours disgustedly,
Major Philip J. Ffolks-Appleby (rtrd),
The Old Granary,
Wittering-cum-Lowdly,
Nr Tunbridge Wells,
Kent

at the end of all my letters to *The Times* I can squirrel the lot away in a buffer called Bye, where it lurks for instant recall. The glossary system lets me create a whole set of such abbreviations and file them for later use.

Experiment with all this awhile, and you will be able to write, edit and print simple documents. Progress is fast because you can try out new functions without any fear of doing permanent damage to your text, thanks to the Undo command that reverses the last action you took. But at this stage you will barely have scratched the surface of what Word can do. The awesome power of the package starts to unfold when you investigate how it handles formatting.

In standard Emacs a format instruction like

@begin(quotation)

makes no change to the screen layout, but is read by the formatting routine run immediately prior to printing. It will be understood as a command to switch in the appropriate left and right margins and observe other format conditions like line spacing, all of which add up to what is called the "environment". This particular environment would be switched off again by the instruction

@end(quotation)

In Word, instead of being bracketed between @begin and @end statements, environment codes are stored invisibly at the end of every paragraph and every division. A division is a section of the text established by the user, perhaps to demarcate chapters of a book or separate a preface from the main body of an article.

The environments are defined by the user in a separate part of the software called the gallery, accessed by way of the main menu. The gallery can be used to establish a number of environments. Each one is given one- or two-character codes so that the gallery can store freeze-dried formats just as the glossary stores canned instant text.

In Edit mode you enter the code by holding down Alt while hitting the appropriate character keys. The code may or may not appear in the left-hand margin of the text window, depending on your choice, but either way the screen changes instantly to reflect the way the text will print out.

The environments and their definition codes can be stored in a style library, grouped according to context. People who spend their time writing articles, reports, memos and letters tend to develop an individual way of laying out each job. Word allows you to have style files called, for example, Article, Report, Memo, Letter, and attach the appropriate one to the file you are working on. This way the person generating memos need only to think about the layout once in a lifetime, not every time one is typed.

The next logical step in the exploration of Word is to start splitting the screen up into windows. A window is simply a bordered section of the screen in which text is handled independently from the other windows, and you can have up to eight of them. The most easily graspable application is when a special window — normally, but not necessarily, at the bottom of the screen — is reserved for collecting footnotes. You might also use the idea to look at two parts of a text simultaneously, for example when moving a paragraph from the end to the beginning of a long document.

You can take the window idea further by attaching different text files to different windows. Grasshopper minds can edit several separate documents at the same time. More orderly authors can move text between documents or use one window to scribble notes on while developing the argument in full on another.

All this works well enough using the basic IBM hardware. The review was run

(continued on next page)

MICROSOFT WORD

(continued from previous page)

on an IBM XT, but the hard disc makes no spectacular difference to performance because Word keeps all its text in memory. Few people work with text files longer than a couple of dozen pages, but if you have an urge to create really large documents, enhancing the IBM to 256K will give you all the space you need to handle over 40,000 words.

A significant difference to Word comes when you plug in the high-resolution graphics board. With the appropriate monitor this will give you colour, and Word is equippped to use this feature to help differentiate between the windows. I find colour monitors excruciatingly eye-aching to work with for any length of time, but the real advantage of high-resolution graphics is that it will enable Word to show italics, underline, double underline characters and the rest of the character enhancements exactly as they will appear in print. On the normal IBM mono screen all enhanced text apart from bold print, which appears highlighted on the screen, is simply displayed in the underlined form. One small bug in this section leaves underlined sections of the text semi-highlighted when the cursor passes over them.

Of course the add-on that really zips up Word's performance is Microsoft's new mouse, which is hardly surprising as the two were conceived together. I have avoided mentioning it so far to make clear that Word is a perfectly viable proposition on its own, but rodent control certainly adds a new dimension.

Unlike some mice, which take over the existing cursor, Microsoft's adds a second, smaller cursor to the screen. It can still be used to give the text cursor a kind of seven league boots to stride over miles of prose with the flick of a wrist, but it has the added advantage of being able to stroll all over the screen, and outside the text window on to the menu. By rolling the mouse cursor across to the appropriate word on the menu and clicking one of the two buttons, any of the listed functions can be summoned without recourse to the keyboard.

The borderlines that box in the windows are also sensitive to a tickle from the mouse. Placing the mouse cursor a certain distance along the left-hand vertical or the lower horizontal of the frame and pressing a button make the text in the window scrolls vertically or horizontally to an extent proportional to the distance. Press the other button and it scrolls the same distance in the opposite direction. The mouse can also summon the text cursor from one window to another, and directly split and recombine windows. Without the mouse window management has to be organised through the menu and is a little cumbersome.

Thanks to the clarity of WYSIWYG, printing out text prepared by Word holds no terrors. The only area of doubt — which will delight WordStar devotees — is that Word is unable to display page breaks dynamically. If you want to know where they will appear you have to run a Repaginate routine, which for a long file means a few minutes of thumb-twiddling while internal goblins go through the text inserting arrows into the margin in the appropriate places. Subsequent changes to the text will invalidate the arrows, requiring a rerun of the routine.

In some badly implemented word processors that work like this you might have to go around this loop several times, setting forced page breaks and seeing the subsequent knock-on effect before you judge the text fit to print. The problem is a lot less likely to arise in Word, where conditional page breaks are implemented far better than WordStar simply by letting you assign the Keep characteristic to paragraphs. Keep paragraphs never break: a new page will be started if the whole paragraph will not fit. It should not be necessary to call on Keep too often, because as a default MTW will automatically avoid creating "widows" — the printers' name for solitary lines split off from their paragraph by a page break.

My biggest disappointment, I suppose, is the fixed menu that permanently takes up the bottom four lines of the screen. Its presence emphasises the family likeness to Multiplan, which is nice for Microsoft's marketing department. Certainly the menu mechanism is going to come in handy when you first approach the package, and experienced users driving mice require it to click the functions into life. But nobody needs it all the time, and there is no reason why it should not be vanished away until summoned, leaving more room on the screen for text.

The multiple file-handing also falls short of excellence. Although you can have several different documents open at any time, each one has to be associated with a window, and of course every window you create makes futher inroads into screen space. This is further complicated by the fact that you cannot create a new window as an object in itself. Instead it has to be cloned from an existing window, carrying over one of its dimensions and all its existing text. Cleaning out the text, attaching a new file and possibly reshaping the window then form additional operations.

This is a pity. In the philosophy of Emacs the business of attaching new files and switching between them is designed to be extremely simple. In Word, if you want to switch around between documents you have the following choices:

A—Make equal-sized windows for each document.

B—Enlarge the window for each document as you work on it, then shrink it again.

C—Keep one large window, then pull the documents in and out of it as you work on them.

If you are just juggling two documents, approach A might be a possible solution. But remember the irremovable menu section is already taking up the lowest four lines of your screen, and each window you create has to give up two rows and two columns to the border. For more than three documents, solution A just is not feasible because the windows will be very pokey.

Suggestion B seems a sensible way of going about things, except that changing the window shape is less than instant for non-mouse users. But unless you really do need to read both texts simultaneously — which in practice is seldom the case — it is a poor substitute for method C.

Solution C is the approach familiar to users of an Emacs development by Mark of the Unicorn for CP/M machines called The Final Word. In it you do not attach files to windows taking up screen space but to buffers, invisible and dynamically changeable segments of the virtual memory. That sounds like a mouthful, I know, and the value of a window is that it is something concrete and easily graspable, which is probably why Microsoft uses the concept.

But buffers are nothing more than invisible windows that you can bring into view at the touch of a button. Once you are used to the economy of screen space implicit in this way of doing things it is not easy to take the mandatory fragmentation that accompanies Microsoft's handling of multiple files. You might assume that Word can be pursuaded to emulate approach C by making the secondary windows very small and then somehow swapping files between windows, but alas the software will not let you.

Nearly all the word processors I have looked at give a character count to keep track of the verbiage being generated — which is useful for journalists in particular. Not so Word. The bottom line of the didsplay shows the percentage of available memory that is being taken up , and and a discreet horizontal bar travels up and down the left-hand side of each window to indicate the position of the cursors relative to the whole file. But there is no built-in word or character count.

Conclusions

● Microsoft's Word is a logically clear, many-talented new word processor that adds considerable lustre to the IBM PC.

● Even without the graphics board and the mouse, Word has a lot to teach existing word-processing packages. With them it is a revelation.

● At £275 it looks like value for money. You can also buy it bundled in with the mouse for £340, which is a real bargain. But if you go for the mouse, cost in the IBM graphics board at a further £216; it is not essential but you will be hard put to resist having the full kit.

● Contact Microsoft at Bulbourne House, Gossoms End, Berkhemsted, Hertfordshire HP4 3LP. Telephone: (07535) 59951.

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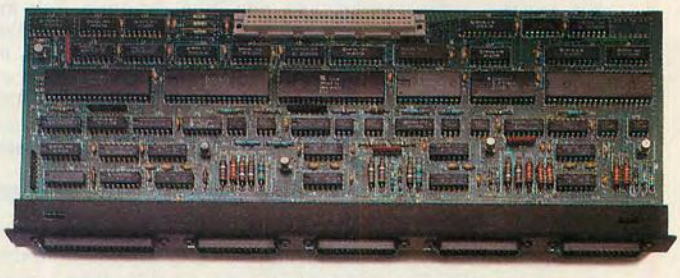

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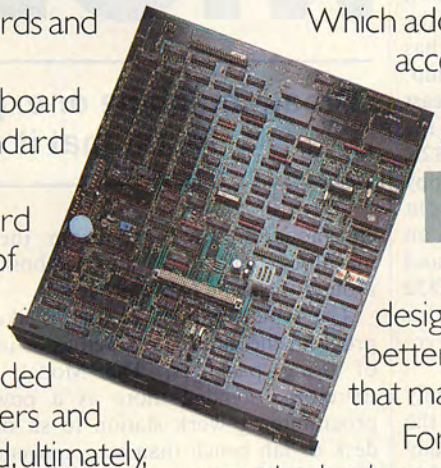

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HEWLETT PACKARD MODEL 16

Dream machine or expensive nightmare? Ian Stobie found that it depends who you are.

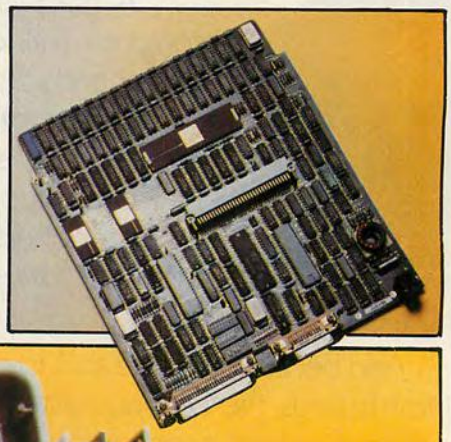
THE FIRST THING to strike you about the Series 200 Model 16 is that it is very compact. Hewlett-Packard has fitted about the same processing power as the Apple Lisa into a square foot or so of desk space, if you don't count the keyboard.

The system's very powerful Motorola 68000 16-bit processor and half a megabyte of memory are packaged in with the 9in. screen in a single unit no bigger than an IBM PC monitor. It sits atop or alongside the dual disc-drive box, which uses Sony 3.5in. drives and is also very compact. The keyboard continues the theme, being just large enough to accommodate a standard-size QWERTY key layout.

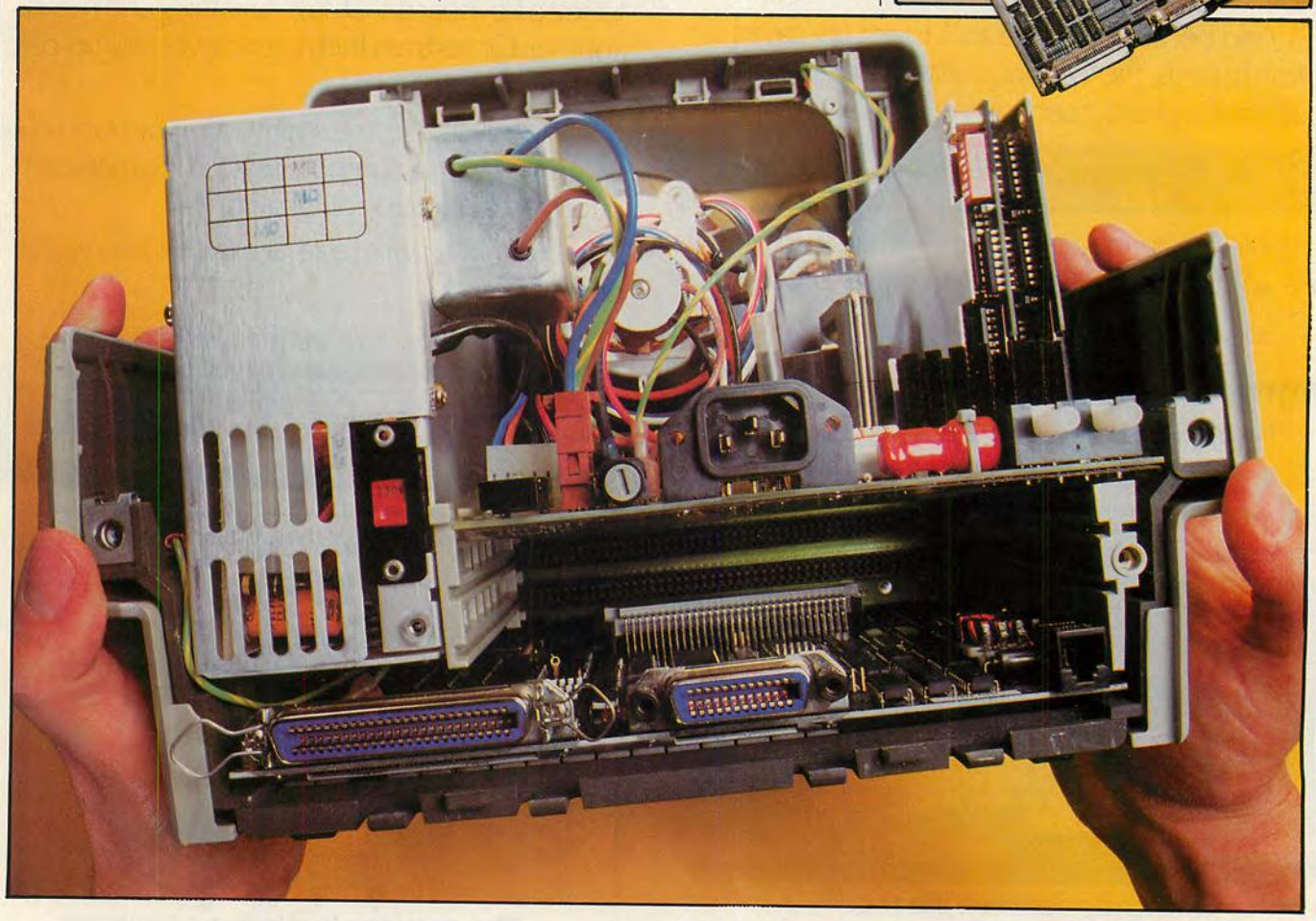
Although Hewlett-Packard is well known for its own processor chips, the Model 16 is the fourth machine it has designed around the Motorola 68000 chip. The Model 16 is the latest and least expensive model in the 200 Series. In the configuration we had to review, with 512K of RAM and twin 270K micro-floppy drives the price is £4,758. We also tried out the 82905B printer, price £604, which is an Epson MX-80 with an HP badge and interface on it, and used the excellent £832 7470A two-pen plotter. The graphs for *Practical Computing*'s October cover, were produced on this system.

Unlike the Lisa, which is intended mainly for first-timers in an ordinary office, the Model 16 is aimed at a more technically sophisticated kind of user, who is probably working in a scientific or technical environment. This accounts for the enormous differences between the two machines even though they are both built around the same 68000 processor.

The typical Model 16 user is likely to program the machine as well as or instead of using packages. The Model 16 is therefore intended more as a powerful programming work station to sit on the desk or lab bench than as a conventional piece of office equipment.



The 68000 processor and 0.5Mbyte of RAM are housed inside the CRT casing.



Taking a closer look at the Model 16 reveals signs of this intended role. The various components of the system are connected together in a neat way with cables that terminate in a standard connecting block. Each block has a plug on one side and a socket on the other, so you can push another block into the back of it, letting you piggyback several cables into the one HPIB socket on the back of the main unit.

The initials HPIB stand for Hewlett-Packard Interface Bus, the HP implementation of the IEEE-488 standard interface originally designed for programmable instrumentation. A large range of specialised instruments can be connected to the Model 16 through it. The only problem I found with this connection method is that with discs, plotter and printer all piggybacked together the back of the main unit began to be pushed away from the wall.

The keyboard also has a tell-tale sign of the special bias of the system, in the rotary control knob positioned to the left above the keys. In some of the general-purpose applications we tried you can turn this knob to move the cursor — around a spreadsheet, for instance or through a word-processing document. The knob's origins go back to HP's Shadow terminal from which the Model 16 casing is descended, where it provided a convenient analogue control for instruments attached to the HPIB. The knob can still be used in this way, and it is supported by appropriate Basic statements.

The typical user may well want a plotter with such a system. The two-pen 7470A plotter is one of HP's smaller models. It can plot on to ordinary A4 paper or, with different pens, on to overhead projector slides. All plotters are fascinating to watch, and the 7470A especially so. The pen is held by an arm which moves from side to side; at the same time the paper is moved backwards and forwards by two rollers. The rollers grip the paper very tightly, leaving a small furrow along two sides of the paper. The system seems to achieve very accurate positioning.

The 7470A can work with two colours at a time under program control: the arm moves across and grabs the appropriate pen when so instructed by the software driving it. For more colours you need to change pens manually.

One particularly elegant feature of the Model 16's Basic, which is typical of the whole HP approach, is that the same set of plotting and drawing commands work on a wide range of different output devices. With our set-up we could display the same graphics image on the screen, on the plotter or on the matrix printer simply by including a line of code to specify the device type.

Software for the system all came on the neat Sony micro-floppies. The Model 16's drives combine HP electronics with Sony Corporation drive mechanisms. The most obvious advantage is compactness, of both drives and storage media. Each drive has a formatted capacity of 270K, or about the same as HP's 5.25in. drives. They are single sided, but double-sided drives are under development. HP can already provide one-plus-one units combining a 3.5in. micro-floppy with 4.6 or 9.6Mbyte hard discs.

The standard operating system is HP's own, and it takes a while to get familiar with it. However, the Model 16 is likely to appeal to the more experienced user, so it should give them few problems. Although powerful it does have some irritating features, particularly the long device names which you have to type in repeatedly.

The graphics presentation package, which has been translated from one HP machine to another over the years, now seems somewhat long in the tooth. It is adequate for presenting graphs in a pre-determined format but you cannot replot the same data as a different type of graph — changing from pie to bar chart, for instance.

By contrast, MBA from Context Management Systems does allow this, but is much more difficult to use. MBA — which also runs on the IBM PC — is a large integrated piece of software based around a spreadsheet of up to 90,000 cells. Cells can contain up to 8,000 characters of text so short documents can be stored. It has involved searching, sorting and retrieval commands like a database. It comes on three discs and takes up a lot of memory. My initial impression is that it is rather complex, requiring a large investment of time to learn to use.

With this type of programming-oriented machine the obvious thing to load up first is Basic. HP Basic is also available on ROM — for an extra £990 — for users who do not want to load from disc. This would also free an appreciable amount of memory as HP Basic is very comprehensive and takes up 277K. Pascal, Fortan and a Hewlett-Packard version of APL, called HPL, are among the other languages available for the Model 16 system.

With Basic loaded, available memory on our 512K system was 240,576 bytes. You are told the available memory without asking for it every time you List, which is very sensible.

The first thing to get used to when using HP Basic is the heavily formatted screen. Only two lines of the 25-line by 80-character display show the lines you

(continued on next page)

Left: the new HP image. Below: the HP Series 200 Model 16 system.

HEWLETT PACKARD MODEL 16

(continued from previous page)
have most recently typed in. The bulk of the screen is taken up with an 18-line output area, with other areas set aside for program prompts, function-key definitions and various indicators.

You can type in lines in the normal way, one at a time with line numbers, or use the editor. The editor is preferable, as program lines do not disappear as you type them in. In fact, you can scroll through a listing to any position using the rotary control knob. You change direction from up-down to left-right by hitting the Shift key. An indicator on the screen shows the current direction.

Having typed in a program, your next surprise is the speed at which it runs. HP Basic is in fact semi-compiled, in that each time you type in a line a symbol table is updated so that labels and variables can be resolved to memory addresses very quickly when the program is actually running.

In a fully compiled Basic — CBasic, for instance — you first have to write the source code with a text editor, then compile it to an intermediate file, then finally run it. Despite its speed, HP Basic is as suited to spontaneous programming as any purely interpreted Basic.

The Model 16 has another trick up its sleeve. While running a program you can list it — in fact you can execute any command that does not require input while a program is running, as the Model 16 is a multi-tasking system. Variables can be inspected and changed, a disc directory obtained, a listing printed, while all the time some massive computation is chugging away.

HP Basic goes well beyond the usual microcomputer Basic in several respects. Apart from providing very good editing and debugging facilities, it allows structured programming and has a number of powerful and unusual commands. The editor allows indenting of program lines and has a Find and Replace facility, which is useful for changing variable names. Lines can optionally have labels as well as line

Specification

CPU: Motorola 68000 running at 8MHZ
RAM: 512K expandable to 768K internally, with further 4.6Mbyte expansion available through external expansion unit
Size: Main unit placed on top of disc unit, and ignoring keyboard, measures 370mm. high by 325mm. wide by 330mm. deep
Display: 9in. diagonal 25-line by 80-character CRT with 300-by-400 dot high-resolution graphics capacity; characters are made up of seven-by-eight matrix within 10-by-12 cell
Keyboard: Detached QWERTY keyboard with five function keys and rotary control knob; knob can be used to position cursor or to generate program interrupts; other keyboard options available with numeric keypad
Interfaces: HPIB and RS-232C; HPIB is IEEE-488 and can communicate with up to 14 devices using piggyback connection system; wide range of optional interfaces available
Discs: Twin 3.5in. micro-floppy drive unit, formatted capacity 270K per drive; uses Sony discs; disc options include 4.6Mbyte and 9.6Mbyte Winchesters
System software: HP Basic 2.0 Pro-Basic language system with integral OS; optional languages include Pascal and HPL, HP's version of APL; Fortran available from third-party supplier; optional operating systems include Digital Research's CP/M-68K and Unix
Application software: HP-supplied packages include VisiCalc, Graphics Presentation, Forecasting, Statistics Library 1, 2 and 3, Numerical Analysis, AC Circuit Analysis, Waveform Analysis
Manufacturer: U.S.-based Hewlett-Packard at its West German plant
U.K. prices: £3,773 for 512K system comprising 9816 main unit, keyboard, and Basic 2.0 on disc; disc drives priced separately at £985 for 9121D dual 3.5in. micro-floppy unit
U.K. distributor: Hewlett-Packard Ltd, Personal Technical Computers, Eskdale Road, Winnersh, Wokingham, Berkshire RG11 5DZ. Telephone: Crowthorne (0344) 773100

The 68000 CPU

Misleading advertising claims are confusing the whole issue of processor performance. The Model 16, with its Motorola 68000 CPU, was designed from the outset to be a programmer's machine running a high-performance Basic, and the choice of chip was important.

The Motorola chip has a 16-bit wide data bus for CPU-to-memory transfers. In other words, it grabs data in 16-bit wide chunks which, other things being equal, is twice as fast as grabbing data in eight-bit chunks. This aspect of a processor's operation is considered to be of fundamental importance and is why the 68000 is called a 16-bit chip. Other popular 16-bit chips are the Zilog Z-8000 and the Intel 8086; the Intel 8088 as used in the IBM PC and ACT Sirius, by contrast, only has an eight-bit wide data bus.

The Motorola 68000 used in the Model 16 can directly address more memory than the other common 16-bit chips. Its 24-bit wide address bus means it can directly address 16Mbyte. By comparison the Zilog Z-8000's 23-bit wide address bus gives it an 8Mbyte address space, while the 20-bit wide address bus on the Intel 8086 and 8088 limits their address space to a single megabyte. This is still superior to the 64K permitted by the 16-bit address bus of the earlier generation Z-80 and 6502 processors, but the more program segments or data available to the user without bank switching or disc accessing the better.

On the HP Model 16 all this address space has been used to provide both a large amount of user RAM and to memory map peripherals, a technique which allows fast and convenient I/O. The main board of the Model 16 has 256K of RAM on it, and two expansion slots allow expansion inside the case up to 768K; our review system had one expansion board fitted. An external expansion box can be used to add more memory, up to another 4.6Mbyte.

Where the Motorola 68000 really scores over the rival processors is that internal arithmetic and logical operations are carried out 32 bits at a time in 32-bit wide registers. This is what makes exceptionally fast and accurate calculations possible. By comparison, the Zilog Z-8000, Intel 8086 and Intel 8088 have 16-bit internal registers. If the Intel 8088, with its limited eight-bit wide data bus, can be advertised as a 16-bit processor — presumably on the strength of the 16-bit width of its internal registers — then you could equally plausibly hype the Motorola 68000 as a 32 bit chip.

In the technically sophisticated market HP is aiming the Model 16 at, claims matter less than performance. HP appears to have chosen the best chip for the job. Running our standard Benchmark tests on the Model 16 we found it the fastest machine we have yet tested. This is so in spite of the high numeric precision — 15 significants digits — of the Basic's default-variable type.

numbers, and you can obtain a full cross-reference table of the labels and variable names you have used.

Debugging aids include tracing, the setting of break points, and single stepping. You can cause the program to run one line at a time by pressing a special Step key on the keyboard. The line being executed is displayed on the screen.

HP Basic permits very long strings of up to 32K characters. They are particularly useful when reading information into a string from a device attached to the HPIB. Substrings are delineated in the ANSI way:

"PRACTICAL" [5,7]

specifies the substring TIC. A full set of graphics commands support both the screen and other HP output devices. In Graphics mode the Model 16's screen can display 300-by-400 dot graphics.

An uncommon but useful command found in HP Basic is Select-Case, which works with all variable types. For example:

```
10 SELECT S$
20 CASE "0" to "9"
30 GOSUB Valid
40 CASE "E"
50 GOSUB End
60 CASE ELSE
70 GOSUB Ignore
80 END SELECT
```

Arrays can have up to six dimensions. You can set a subscript range for each dimension anywhere between 32K and −32K. Twenty commands are provided to allow external events to interrupt normal program flow and force a branch to a named subroutine. HP Basic is documented in a set of four manuals. They are not included in the cost of the system but are thorough and include indexes.

All in all HP Basic seems very complete. For more specialised applications HP provides an extension package which contains another 170 Basic statements, mainly matrix manipulation and external device handling.

Marketing push

Hewlett-Packard is the world's seventh-biggest manufacturer of computers, selling $2.2 billion dollars worth of computing kit in 1982. It is structured into 44 fairly autonomous divisions, 22 of which produce computers in some form, the others mainly instruments. The company's growth has been achieved with very little borrowing. This financial rectitude has historically been coupled with an unwillingness to shout very loud about the company's expensive but generally technically excellent products.

HP is now trying to reorganise itself into a more marketing-oriented company. While the restrained technical approach was alright for its traditional instrumentation and technical-computing business, HP does not want to lose out on the computer boom. The company still remembers that Apple was founded in 1977 by a defector from HP: Steve Wozniak was an HP engineer.

The plan is to move from number 7 to number 3, behind IBM and DEC, by 1986, and one of the first manifestations of the new HP is the promotion of the Model 16. A brash and bold leaflet has landed through many of the nation's letterboxes. According to an HP handout: "direct mail thrust is expected to exceed 200,000 individual shots — close to the U.K.'s entire universe for Electronic Engineers, Scientists and Technical Professionals."

The Model 16 leaflet aims to impress the nation's technical elite with a rather disreputable-looking cartoon lion, which appears to be trying to sell them the computer. The Lion describes the rotary control knob as a "super personal magic wheel". The accompaying personalised letter quotes *Byte* magazine as describing the Model 16 as "a lion packaged as a house cat". What it fails to note is that the *Byte* article in question, published in June 1983, was written by John Monahan, an employee of Hewlett-Packard's Desktop Computer Division. So it is just one HP publicist quoting another.

I'm probably not alone in preferring the old HP style. The real way for HP to win wider markets is by dropping its prices.

Micro-floppy discs

Although at first sight not a very spectacular development, the 3.5in. micro-floppy discs are very convenient in practice. They mark a large step forward from conventional floppy discs.

The small discs are tougher for three reasons. First, the recording film is mounted inside a rigid plastic case. Second, a metal shutter covers the gap where the read/write heads need to get close to the recording surface. On the HP drives the shutter is automatically opened when the disc is inserted, and closed again when the disc is removed, so the recording medium itself is always protected from finger marks and dust. Finally, the micro-floppy has a solid metal centre. Conventional floppy discs are gripped and rotated through the centre hole, the edge of which is subject to a good deal of wear.

HP says it is already shipping more 3.5in. micro-floppy drives than 5.25in. and 8in. drives combined. It expects to deliver six times as many in this first year of availability. Apart from the greater compactness and convenience to the customer, the failure rate of the drives themselves is said to be only one-quarter of that experienced with HP's 5.25in. drives Users benefit, and HP does too as it saves money under guarantee provisions.

Benchmarks

The HP Series 200 Model 16 is the fastest machine we have tested. The table shows the time in seconds to run eight standard Benchmark routines. They test out various typical tasks, each routine repeating an appropriate set of Basic statements 1,000 times. We were using the HP Basic 2.0 language system supplied on disc with the Model 16.

	BM1	BM2	BM3	BM4	BM5	BM6	BM7	BM8	Av.
HP Series 200 Model 16 – 68000 CPU	0.2	0.6	1.4	1.6	1.7	2.8	4.3	15	3.4
Orion – 8086 CPU	0.6	2.1	4.8	4.9	5.8	10.5	16.7	13	7.3
Olivetti M-20—Z-8000 CPU	1.1	4.0	8.0	8.4	9.2	17.1	26.5	12	10.8
IBM PC – 8088 CPU	1.2	4.8	11.7	12.2	13.4	23.3	37.4	30	16.9

Conclusions

- **The HP model 16 is extremely compact and also extremely powerful. It is primarily intended for users who require great precision and speed or the ability to connect their system up to instrumentation.**
- **To use the Model 16 solely for general office work would be expensive overkill. A machine with less processing performance but a larger base of general software would be more appropriate.**
- **The availability of general office software for the Model 16 is of importance because it allows the machine to be more fully employed when placed in a technical environment, doing routine tasks as well as those demanding high performance.**
- **The 3.5in. micro-floppy discs are a great success. They are convenient to use and handle, and will probably rapidly be adopted by other manufacturers in place of conventional 5.25in. floppies.**
- **HP Basic is very impressive. Fortunately the Model 16 has lots of memory as it is also very big — 277K! Asmemory costs fall and the processors capable of using it become more widespread perhaps the Basics offered on other machines will start reaching similar standards.**
- **For the user/programmer, especially one working in a technical environment, the Model 16 must be dream machine of the year.**

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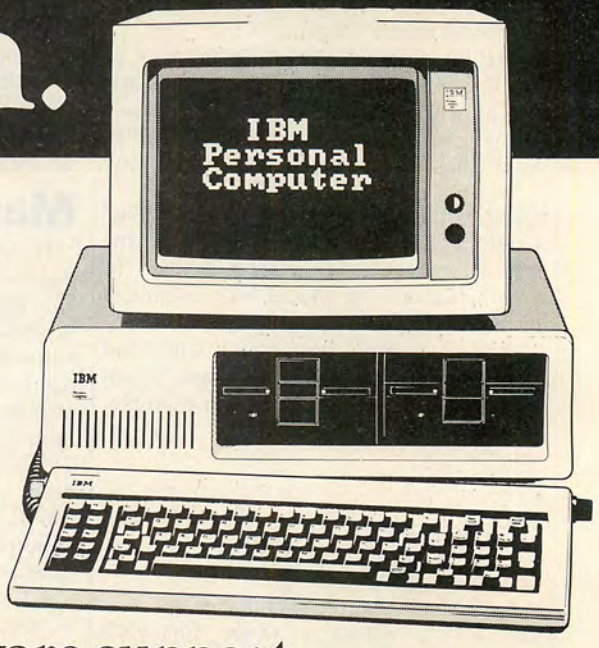

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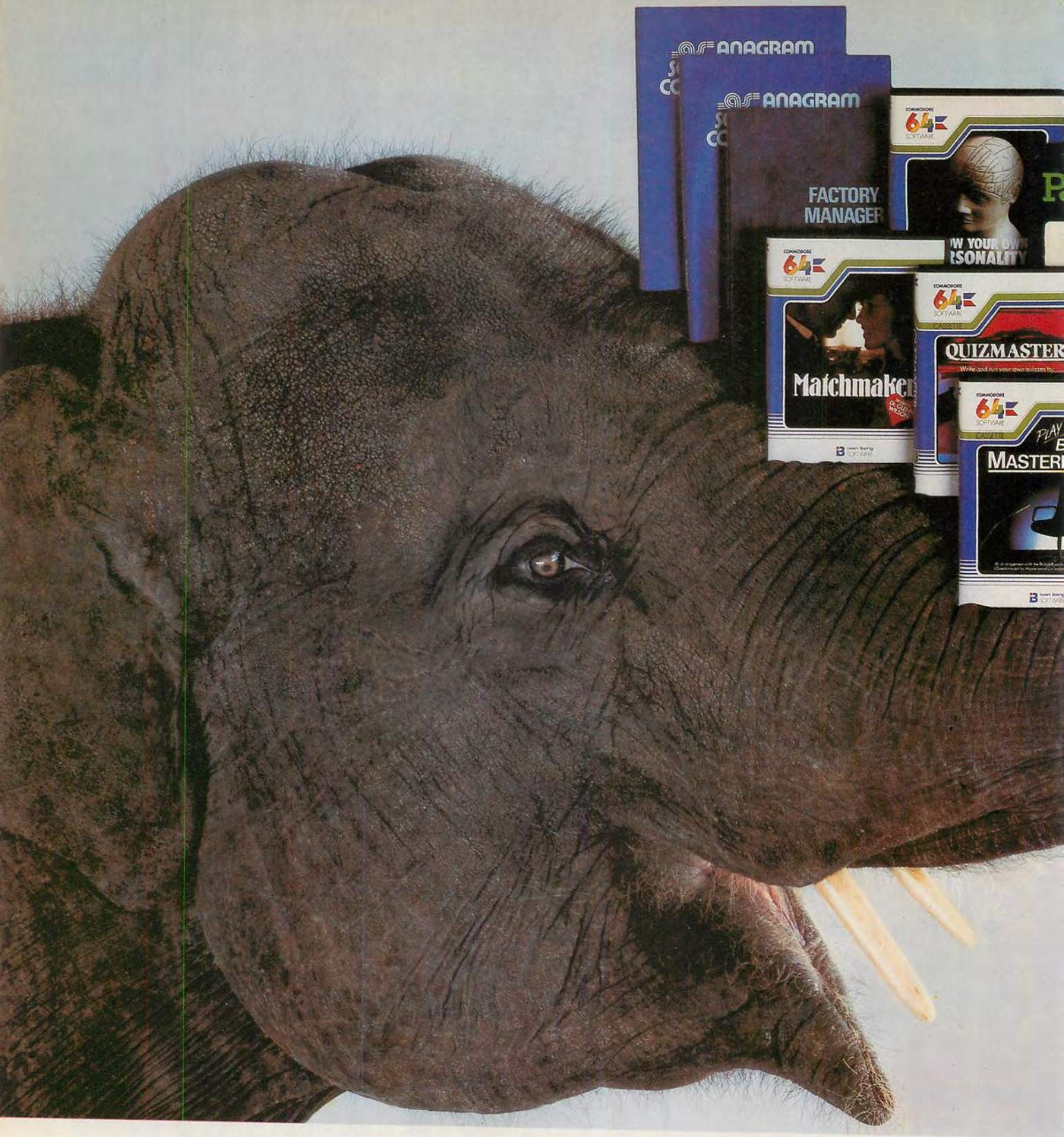

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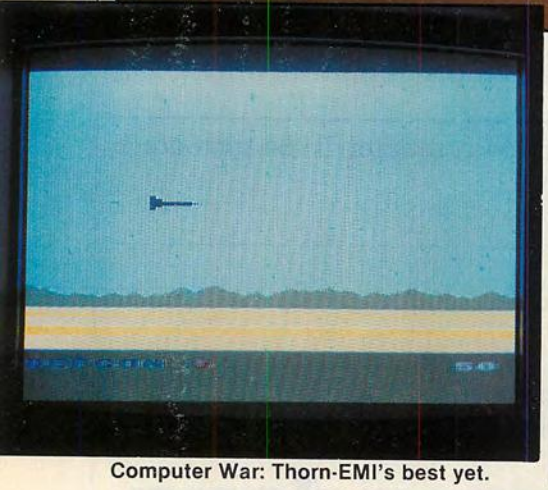
ATARI 800XL

Jack Schofield, already a fan of the old 800, discovers it had some faults after all. But the new 800XL . . .

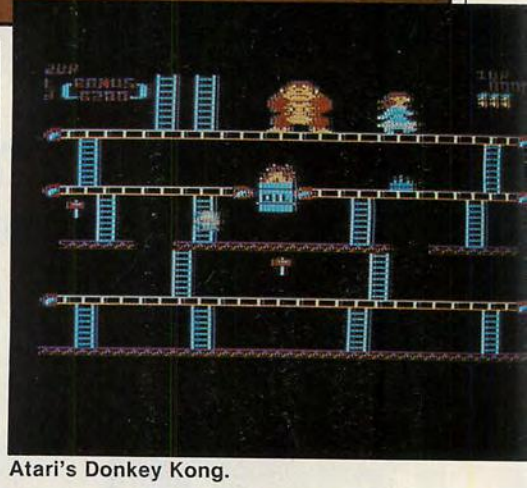


Computer War: Thorn-EMI's best yet.

THE BEST THING about the new Atari 800XL is that it is pretty much the same as the old 800. Atari, like Apple with the IIe, has such a large user base world-wide, and so much software, that it was essential to retain compatibility.

Thus it was possible to write much of this review on the review machine, using Atariwriter and an 810 disc drive. I was also able to try some new games, including Astro-Chase, Super-Cobra and Chess from Parker Brothers, Caverns of Mars on ROM and Donkey Kong from Atari, plus the excellent Computer War — Thorn-EMI's best effort yet.

I also tested a number of older programs. When loading autoboot discs like Zaxxon



Atari's Donkey Kong.

and VisiCalc, you just hold down the Option key when switching on to switch out the Basic ROM and free the available RAM. With autoboot tapes using Basic, you still hold down Start as before.

There must be some software that uses illegal entry points in the operating-system ROM, or something of that kind, which will run on the woo but not on the 800XL. I could only find one — a pre-release EPROM version of Astro-Chase from Parker Brothers. All available peripherals worked with the 800XL.

The new machine offers several improvements over the 800 which it replaces. The most obvious one is the 64K of RAM instead of 48K. Of course, this does not provide any more RAM free to Basic: there is still about 37.5K, the same as the Commodore 64, because that is all the 6502 CPU can handle once it has taken care of Basic and the operating system. It was disappointing to find that no extra RAM is available to machine-code programs such as VisiCalc.

There are many other changes to both the machine and the system. Appearance is greatly improved. The case is much smaller — less than half the size — and has attractive two-tone styling and brushed silver function keys.

The 800XL has more potential for expansion. A new edge connector expansion bus has been provided on the back to take an eight-slot system box called The Expander. It will hold Apple-style expansion cards to offer such options as a 128K RAM-disc, hard disc, flat-screen TV interface, IBM PC emulator, IEEE-448 interface and a few other fancy gadgets. Some of them have been available to fit inside the 800 in a memory slot, but this meant removing one or two of the 16K RAM cards and substituting a 32K or 48K card with the option card.

For self testing a new Help key brings up a self test of the RAM, keyboard, four sound channels and graphics. Such diagnostic routines are normally found only on far more expensive micros.

Two new debugged ROM chips replace the old operating-system card and cartridge-load Basic. One 16K chip includes the old 10K operating sysem and the new self-test routines. An 8K ROM on the single board now holds the Basic. The Basic has been further — and apparently completely — debugged.

More graphics

The 800XL has new capabilities in text and graphics. There are four new graphics modes using the existing Antic and GTIA custom graphics chips. They are actually existing Antic modes which were previously very troublesome to access from Basic. There is now an international character set in addition to the standard set, the double-width set and the double-width/double-height set. The international characters include accents, umlauts, and a £ sign CHR$(8), all in both normal and inverse forms. The extra characters are accessed by Poking 204 decimal into location 756 — which is less than delightful but is necessary to retain compatibility with existing software. It is still possible to redefine the character set.

The new line of four micros brings with it a new range of peripherals in the same two-tone black-and-grey style. They include the 1050 double-density 5.25in. disc drive with DOS-3, the 1010 dedicated cassette recorder, Super Joysticks, Trak Ball, a touch-tablet and three new printers.

With DOS-3 the 1050 offers only a rather poor 127K of storage, which is not quite up to Apple standards. Compatibility with the 810 has been preserved, however. The 1010 recorder, like the other new add-ons, has two serial ports so it no longer has to be at the end of the peripheral daisy-chain. The £70 touch-tablet is brilliant, and so is the light-pen.

The 1025 printer is an 80-column dot-matrix model; the 1020 four-colour printer/plotter resembles the Tandy/Oric/Sharp models. Like the others, the letter-quality 1027 printer plugs straight into the 800XL. It may only do 20 characters per second, but the print quality is outstanding, and it costs only £299.

Atari's 80-column CP/M add-on has already been demonstrated running on an Atari 800. As it hangs on the serial bus it works with any Atari, including the existing 400 and new 800XL. The only CP/M programs available on Atari disc were WordStar and Multiplan. However, there are plans to add all the most popular programs including dBase II, Peachpak software, Pascal/MT+ and Sorcim's Super* series.

Of course, Atari CP/M add-ons have been available — mainly in the U.S. — for some time. They include the Critical Connection, ATR-8000 and Micro Mainframe. The ATR-8000 already offers an 8088 board with 256K of RAM and either CP/M-86 or MS-DOS for IBM PC compatibility, while the Micro Mainframe is able to read and write most disc formats. However, having an Atari-backed system will do wonders for hardware interchangeability and software availability.

There are already over 50 programs in Atari's main line of programs, plus over 150 in the cheaper APX line-up, and the rate at which programs are being introduced has increased. New issues scheduled include a superb Logo, 10 games including Pole Position, Robotron, Joust, Jungle Hunt and Ms Pacman, plus more serious software such as Family Finances and Timewise. The original VisiCalc has been relaunched with the new machines.

Internally the 800XL shows the same kind of advances as the Commodore 64. The seven separate pieces of a 48K 800 with Basic have been reduced to a single clean board. There are still five big integrated circuits, of course: Antic, GTIA, PIA, Pokey and the 6502 itself. However, a small IC has taken over the timing from a mass of capacitors and resistors. Memory is greatly simplified to a single row of eight 64K chips. Finally, the PAL monitor circuitry has been cleaned up and improved. The result is that the 800XL is cleaner and neater than the 800. It should prove even more reliable, and of course be much cheaper to manufacture. There may be other differences I missed. No documentation was supplied with the review machine.

Not much has been sacrificed from the 800, except the huge, solid aluminium interior casing. It has been replaced by tin sheeting folded over the main board to prevent RF interference. You could stand a monitor on the old 800 but you couldn't do it with the new one.

Another thing to go is the small loudspeaker inside the case. Now all the beeps, synthesised sounds and key clicks are output through to the TV set, or via the

(continued on next page)

Basic mode	Antic Mode	Cols × Rows	Colours × shades	RAM required
0	2	40 × 24	2	992
1	6	20 × 24	5	672
2	7	20 × 12	5	420
3	8	40 × 24	4	432
4	9	80 × 48	2	696
5	A	80 × 48	4	1,176
6	B	160 × 96	2	2,184
7	D	160 × 96	4	4,200
8	F	320 × 192	2	8,138
9	F	80 × 192	1 × 16	8,138
10	F	80 × 192	9 × 5	8,138
11	F	80 × 192	16 × 1	8,138
12	4	40 × 24	5	1,152
13	5	40 × 12	5	660
14	C	160 × 192	2	4,296
15	E	160 × 192	4	8,138

Modes 12 to 15 are new to the XL line.

Mode 9 offers 16 shades of one colour, where mode 11 offers 16 colours but all the same intesity. Mode 10 offers nine colours and five intensities. Different modes can be mixed on the screen at the same time.

ATARI 800XL

(continued from previous page)

composite video DIN port to a hi-fi outfit.

There is only one cartridge slot, instead of two. Very few cartridges were made for the right-hand slot, but if you own, say, the Eastern House Monkey Wrench toolkit you will not be able to use it with the 800XL. The 800XL is no longer turned off automatically when inserting or removing cartridges, but doing this with the power on seems to do no harm.

There are only two joystick ports, instead of four. This may bother people with the Thorn-EMI Soccer and Ice Hockey cartridges — which were playable by four players — but not many others. People like me, who have converted two of the joystick ports into one eight-bit parallel port, will have to find a different way of driving an Epson MX-80 or similar parallel printer. In other respects, the 800XL seem to match the 800, as reviewed in the July 1982 issue of *Practical Computing*, pages 74 to 78.

The 800 keyboard was quite good, but the XL one is superb and suitable for fast touch-typing. The matt finish and the clarity of the labelling are improvements. In addition, Atari has corrected the solitary placing error of its previous models: the key which gives inverse video has been moved to beyond the right Shift key. It no longer carries the Atari logo, but graphically declares its function.

In all there are 57 typewriter keys plus five function keys including Help and Reset. The Shift keys are huge. A Caps key toggles between upper and lower case. A Control key allows the set of 29 graphics characters to be entered directly, though they are not marked on the keyboard. The Control key also allows four-way cursor movement through the full-screen editor.

As Atari Basic dates back to 1979 it is by now quite a well known dialect. It offers rather better support for the hardware than Commodore Basic, and while it is poor compared to BBC Basic it is only half the size. It has no structured commands, but you can Goto a variable name to emulate the BBC's procedures.

The advantages of Atari Basic are that it provides syntax checking on line entry and superb editing facilities. It also provides long, meaningful variable names, and some useful error trapping. It offers long strings rather than string arrays, which some think of as a bug but I think is a feature.

There is no single-key keyword entry, but there is a quick alternative: abbreviations can be used instead. For example, you can enter GR. for Graphics, SE. for Setcolor, DR. for Drawto, F. for For and N. for Next, etc. Basic is tokenised and so expands them when you list the program.

The few bugs in the original Basic seem to have been dealt with. After long editing sessions the Basic never hangs up. A naked input no longer causes a lock up, and the unary minus, -0, works correctly. Dimensioning a string larger than memory now produces an error message. If there are other bugs in the Basic, I couldn't find them.

The 800XL runs the standard Benchmarks a tiny bit quicker than the 800. However, Atari Basic is still slow, and far too slow for action games unless you are a clever programmer. There are quicker Basics such as Basic A+, Basic XL and Microsoft Basic for the Atari, three compiled Basics, plus numerous other languages, including Pilot, several assemblers and macro-assemblers, five Forths, Pascal, Datasoft's Lisp, OSS's Tiny C, etc. If you don't like Atari Basic, you don't have to lump it.

A fast new games language called Action! is on the way from Optimized Systems Software, the original author of Atari Basic. It comes on a 24K ROM cartridge with the compiler paged in 8K. It is said to have features from assembler, Pascal and C, and the U.S. price is $100, or $65 discount. Sounds wonderful; not here yet.

The 800XL is already a great games machine, but can it offer more? It is suitable as a home machine thanks to the smattering of family programs and Atari's excellent computerised card index, Home Filing Manager. With the easy-to-use Atariwriter word processor on a ROM cartridge, and a cheap letter-quality printer, it is eminently suitable for word processing at home.

From the educational point of view there are some good programs but most of these are American in origin. Atari (U.K.) is starting to tackle this by converting American to English, but the BBC Micro, the cheaper Electron and even cheaper Spectrum all look better bets from this point of view because they are widely used in schools.

Apart from VisiCalc and some database programs, U.K. business software remains thin. There are the Chipsoft accounting and ledger packages, which require discs and/or Microsoft Basic, and a few others, but the Commodore 64 already has more business software. With the CP/M and IBM options it will of course become a viable option, but then Commodore and Acorn are both promising CP/M too.

One area where Atari will score is in support. It has over 70 local service centres where a machine can be taken for repair. There is also an excellent user hotline which will answer queries promptly over the phone. Atari publishes a glossy magazine *I/O* which is free to users. And there are already around 100 user groups.

In an industry where many new machines leave the user isolated, with no software or peripherals, struggling to debug crass errors in the basic machine, the 800XL represents an attractive alternative.

Specification

CPU: 6502C running at 1.79MHz
Specialised ICs: GTIA graphics display; Pokey sound generator and control of ports; Antic screen and I/O
ROM: 16K operating system and diagnostics; 8K Basic
RAM: 64K; 37.5K free to Basic
Keyboard: 57 typewriter keys with auto-repeat plus five function keys including Help key
Display: 16 modes, from 40 characters by 24 lines of text to 320 by 192 pixels graphics; up to 16 shades of up to 16 colours
Sound: four channels, sound synthesiser with distortion control, up to 3.5 octave range with 255 notes from Basic; about eight octaves via Pokes; sound or music from dedicated cassette recorder can be incorporated in programs; key click and all other sound output via TV.
Ports: ROM cartridge slot, 8-16K; two joystick ports; PAL TV output; composite video/sound output port; serial bus; processor bus for expansion connection
Special features: player-missile graphics, equivalent to Commodore's sprites; upper/lower-case character set with 29 block-graphics characters; international character set; double-width and double-height characters
Power: separate transformer; on/off switch on back of console
Dimensions: 374 × 220 × 57mm. approx.

Conclusions

● The Atari 800XL is a well designed, thoroughly debugged, well supported home/games micro with an outstanding specification at a reasonable price. It knocks machines like the Lynx and the Electron into a cocked hat.

● The 800XL already has peripherals available, including discs, and masses of software, making it usable right from the start.

● With either the Expander box or 80-column CP/M upgrade, which has a Z-80 running at 4MHz, it could grow into a business machine — but, like the BBC Model B and Commodore 64, only for a very small business. The wide availability of Atari servicing and the user hot-line are advantages.

● So far Atari does not seem to have achieved the kind of market share in the U.K. which as a $2 billion corporation it enjoys in the rest of the world. The XL range could change that. The hardware and software are there, but it still needs the marketing.

● The 800XL costs £249.99 and is distributed by Atari International (U.K.) Ltd, Atari House, Railway Terrace, Slough, Berkshire, Telephone: Slough (0753) 33344.

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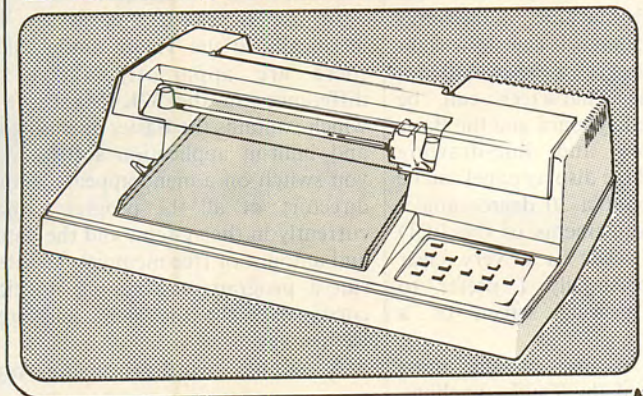

Despite the myriad imitations, the 7470A Plotter is the **only** one with "Sweet-Lips" technology. It's interesting to see other plotters producing what appears to be a similar output to the 7470A, but if accuracy in dimensions is important to you, then you'll find that few if any can match the Hewlett-Packard expertise. The HP 7470A can plot 1000 points in a 1-inch line! With that degree of resolution coupled with the capability to run almost all popular micros, **and** the back-up and experience of one of the world's largest manufacturers, you can't afford to sell lesser machines.

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OLIVETTI M-10

Ian Stobie visited Olivetti's U.K. headquarters to get the feel of its new Japanese-built lap portable.

OLIVETTI'S M-10 battery-powered portable computer is strikingly similar to the Tandy 100. This is not surprising as both machines are made in Japan for their respective famous-name suppliers by the same company, Kyocera.

We reviewed the Tandy machine, in a generally favourable way, in the August issue of *Practical Computing*. But there are enough differences between the two versions in specification and the way they are being sold to warrant taking a look at the machine as it appears in its Olivetti colours.

Olivetti says the M-10 will be available in November, while Tandy's Model 100 is on sale in Tandy stores now. Both systems cost around £500 for the unexpanded machines with 8K RAM. A system with the full 32K of RAM costs £730 from Tandy; Olivetti's price is likely to be similar.

These prices are also roughly comparable with the similar-sized Epson HX-20 portable. The HX-20 is actually slightly less expensive at £402 for the 16K model, but it has a much smaller four-line by 20-character display. On the other hand it comes complete with a built-in 24-column dot-matrix printer and has an optional £75 micro-cassette drive which fits neatly on the machine.

To complicate the choice still further NEC is about to launch another version of the Kyocera machine in the U.K., this time with internal RAM expandable to 64K and with optional 32K battery-backed RAM cartridges for program or data storage. The NEC machine will cost £475 for the 16K version, £828 for the 64K version, with the battery-backed RAM cartridges costing £195.

The display is the most striking feature of the Olivetti system as large LCD arrays are still quite unusual. Taking up most of the top surface of the machine, it measures about 195mm. by 50mm. It can show eight lines of 40 characters, or 64-by-240 dot graphics. Graphic characters can be generated from the keyboard and the Basic has point-plotting and line-drawing commands. The whole display panel can be propped up at about a 30 degree angle. Combined with adjustments of the LCD itself the overall result is a very clear display, which personally I prefer to looking at the glowing screen of a conventional CRT.

The keyboard is one of the most attractive features of the Tandy machine, and the Olivetti keyboard feels equally good. The U.K. version has two more keys than the Tandy and resembles the IBM PC keyboard a little, with the Backslash key between the Z and the left Shift.

In use the M-10 appears to behave identically to the Tandy model, although there are apparently a few minor differences in the 32K Microsoft ROM which contains the Basic, operating system and built-in application software. When you switch on a menu appears, showing a directory of all the programs and files currently in the system, and the date, time and amount of free memory. To select and run a program you simply position the cursor over the file name and press the Return key.

A simple word-processing program

called Text lets you prepare text or program files. It has rather limited formatting abilities but does have useful features like Search and Replace, Block Move and Block Copy.

The Basic interpreter offers 14-digit numeric precision without being too slow, which is a considerable achievement for a CMOS machine. The M-10 hardware is well supported, with Basic commands for the graphics and sound, and function keys. The Olivetti manual is clear and comprehensive, although I think someone new to programming would have to buy a book to supplement the rather skimpy tutorial section on Basic.

The Telcom program is for transferring files through the RS-232C interface. It allows you to change various parameters like the baud rate, parity and number of stop bits, and then send or receive named files. I was not able to try this during my visit. It is supposedly easy to connect machines up and transfer files, providing the two machines you are using have the standard RS-232C interface, but I have found that in practice it often turns out that something thwarts you. Olivetti is offering three different RS-232C cables, so one of them should work.

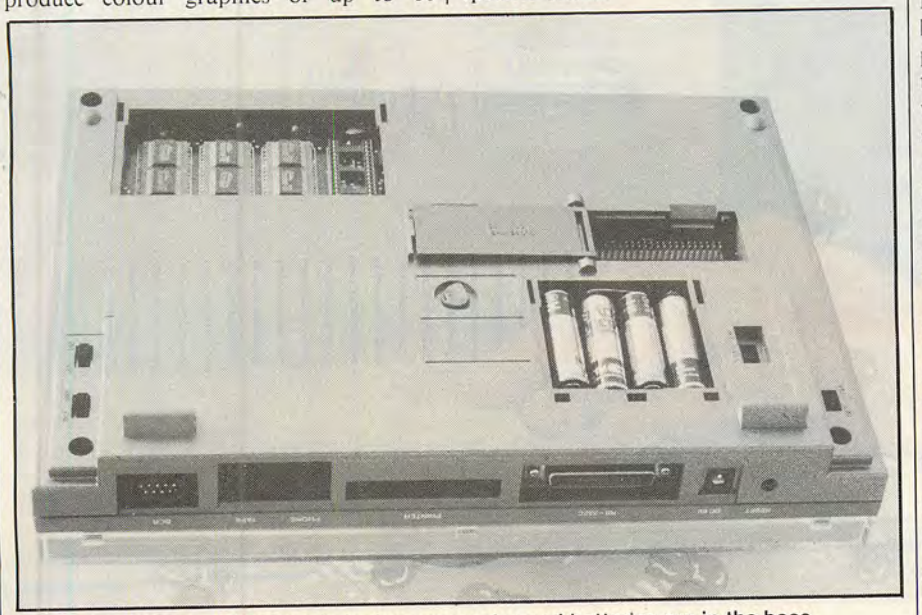
The M-10 will be distributed in the U.K. through Olivetti's existing 350 dealers. Many of them will be bundling the M-10 up with software for specific vertical markets and looking to sell to larger customers in fleet quantities. To reach the individual buyer more effectively Olivetti is also negotiating arrangements to sell through some of the major independent High Street retail chains.

Olivetti plans to have a battery-powered acoustic-coupling modem available at the same time as the machine for around £200. Also battery-powered is Olivetti's PL-10 four-pen plotter, similar to the Oric and Tandy plotters and costing around £150. It has four small ball-point pens mounted on a carousel mechanism which allows it to produce colour graphics or up to 80 characters of text across 115mm. paper rolls.

The other vital peripheral the Olivetti needs is a cassette recorder, for storing programs or data. Although Olivetti says any cassette recorder should work from the cassette interface it will be recommending a specific brand.

Specification

CPU: OKI 80C85, an eight-bit CMOS code-compatible look-alike to the Intel 8085, running at 2.4MHz
ROM: 32K ROM containing Microsoft-written software; free slot for additional 32K ROM
RAM: 8K expandable to 32K; battery backed.
Size: 300 × 210 × 50mm.
Weight: 1.7kg.
Power supply: Four AA batteries or equivalent lasting a claimed 20 hours in continuous use; internal NiCad back-up batteries are fitted as standard; AC adaptor optional
Display: tiltable eight-line by 40-character liquid-crystal display with contrast adjustment; 64 by 240 dot addressable graphics.
Keyboard: full-size QWERTY layout with full-travel keys; eight programmable function keys, eight other special keys; numeric keypad simulated with Numeric key
Interfaces: parallel printer interface; RS-232C serial; tape cassette; bar-code reader
Software: Standard ROM contains Microsoft Basic, Text mini word processor, simple address list and appointments scheduler and communications software
Manufacturer: Kyocera, Japan for Italian-based Olivetti
U.K. distributor: British Olivetti Ltd, Olivetti House, PO Box 89, 86-88 Upper Richmond Road, London SW15 2UR. Telephone 01-785 6666; scheduled for distribution in November at around £500 including VAT for 8K version.



Expansion ROM and RAM sockets, bus connector and batteries are in the base.

One of the advantages the Epson HX-20 enjoys over the Tandy Model 100 is the volume of independent software available. It is helped by having a reliable method of program distribution, in the Epson-supplied micro-cassette, but there is nothing to stop standard cassette tape software being supplied for the Olivetti M-10. The machine also has space for another 32K ROM, which may well attract system houses developing customised hardware, as no cassette and no loading are necessary.

It is too early to say whether a large body of cassette-based software aimed at the individual user will develop for the M10. Olivetti says some software houses are working on such packages and that a Calc is on its way. The real question is whether between them NEC, Tandy and Olivetti can sell enough machines, as software writers can probably cover all three systems with little extra effort.

Conclusions

● The M-10 is virtually the same machine as the Tandy 100. Principle differences from the Tandy are the more IBM-like keyboard layout and the fact that the display panel pops up.

● The M-10's large eight-line by 40-character LCD display is clear in normal light conditions and the keyboard is excellent.

● Undoubtedly highly portable, the M-10 is well suited for commercial applications requiring text entry or data capture away from the mains power supply. It is also suitable as a personal machine for writing and using quick programs while on the move.

● Olivetti's matching battery-powered acoustic coupler and printer will be important to the success of the M-10, allowing it to be expanded into a powerful communicating computing system.

● The M-10 is also very similar to the NEC PC-8201, which is also about to be launched in the U.K. The NEC has the potential for greater memory expansion than either the Olivetti or Tandy machines, which may be an advantage in some applications.

● The strength of Olivetti's distribution network and its marketing resources give the M-10 a good chance of emerging the best seller out of these three similar machines.

● The similarly priced Epson HX-20 is probably a more suitable machine, with its micro-cassette drive installed, for applications requiring the collection of large amounts of data in the field. The Epson also has a larger existing independent software base.

● All of these portable machines are inferior to similarly priced home computers in terms of processing speed and display facilities. They are only worth considering if true portability is important to your application.

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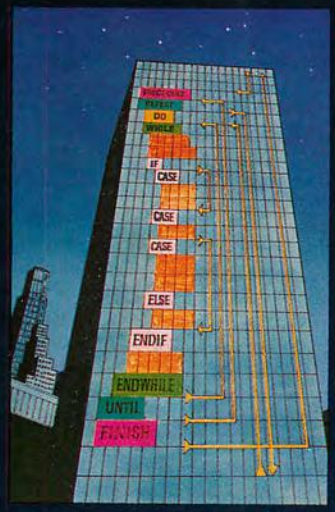

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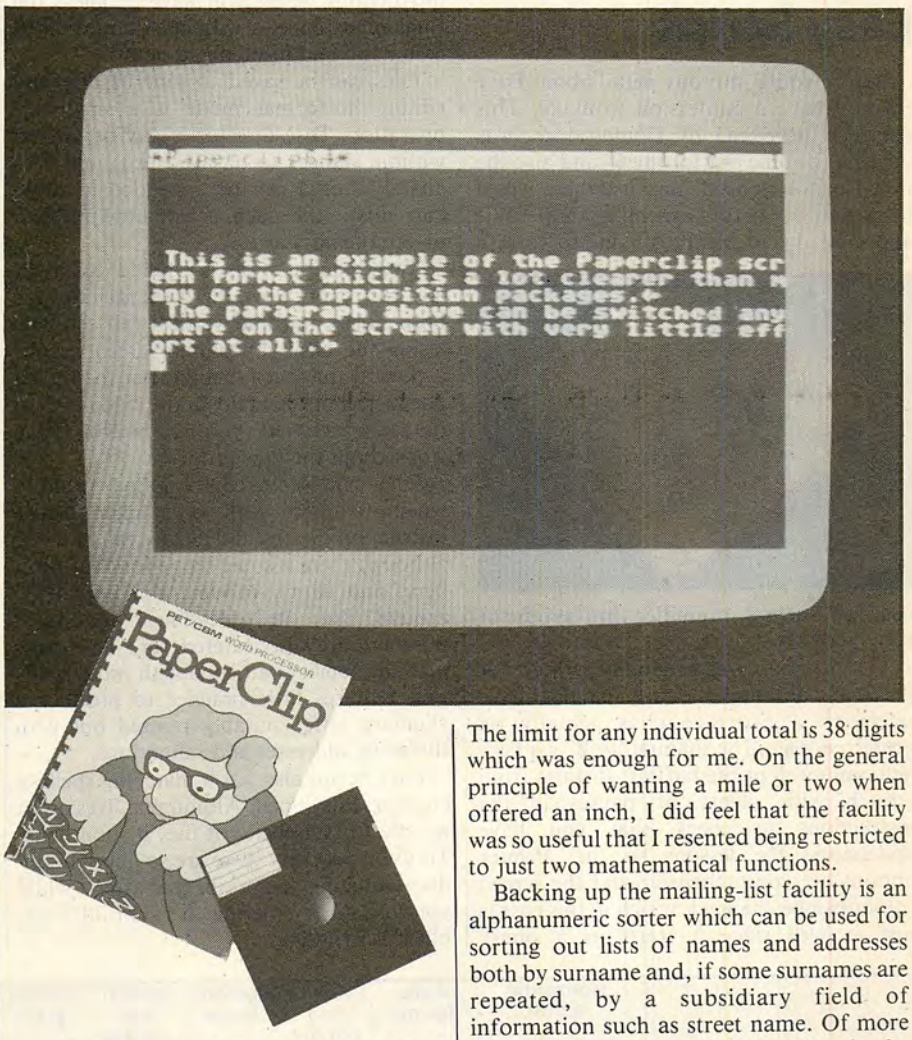
The 64K question

The Commodore 64 is hailed as one of the best home micros for word processing — but which package to buy? Barbara Conway offers some advice


This is an example of the Paperclip scr
een format which is a lot clearer than m
any of the opposition packages.
The paragraph above can be switched any
where on the screen with very little eff
ort at all.
PET/CBM WORD PROCESSOR
PaperClip

WHEN COMMODORE introduced its new 64K computer a large part of the sales pitch was that here, at last, was the perfect dual-purpose machine for home and business. Like most such claims it was a little over-enthusiastic. The machine itself turned out to be more of a curious hybrid, with plenty of memory and features for home use but some major drawbacks as far as the serious business user was concerned, including the very limited Basic and the 40-column screen.

Yet the 64 has some admirable qualifications for use as a word processor. The ample memory allows long documents or chapters to be included in each file. And the superb Commodore screen editor tends to spoil regular users for other micros. With built-in advantages like these, the 64 was an obvious candidate for WP programs and, after a delay of several months following its launch, it got them.

I have looked at most of the packages currently on the market for the 64 — and more are imminent. Prices range from £40 to over £80, so the buyer can afford to be choosy and, perhaps predictably, it turns out that price is an unreliable guide to quality.

Paperclip 64

The opening screen is clear and inviting and the program does nothing to disappoint — quite the contrary. Paperclip 64 is one of the easiest of the professional word processors to use, with a sensible manual and plenty of aids for the accident-prone.

The package consists of a disc, a 112-page manual and a dongle which slots into the first joystick port. There are a wide variety of options for printer files, including my own version of the Epson MX-80, plus a do-it-yourself guide to setting up a printer if you do not own one of the many models provided for. I did have a little trouble loading the right variation for my printer. So perhaps the instructions need to be a little clearer on that point. If one idiot can become fuddled then so can others.

All in all there is very little to complain of in Paperclip 64. All the standard functions are there and several fancy additions to the normal minimum. Although it does not format as you type, the format instructions are fairly effortless. You can switch whole paragraphs, lines or phrases with a few keystrokes, and highlight word by word if you need to.

Another pleasing facility, particularly for those writing technical documents, is the ability to give special identification keys to phrases which are likely to crop up frequently. All you then need to do is press the relevant key, and your phrase, complex latin name or whatever is printed for you. Considerable effort has been spent on ensuring that all functions are accessed easily, including disc operations.

Another feature which will appeal to professional users is the numeric mode. It allows you to perform simple arithmetical operations with the program, and makes life a great deal easier when you prepare your tax returns, or the like. Having struggled with this task on other programs, I found it a pleasure on Paperclip 64. Setting out columns of figures, and even manipulating them in spreadsheet style, is easy although the actual calculations allowed are only addition and subtraction. The limit for any individual total is 38 digits which was enough for me. On the general principle of wanting a mile or two when offered an inch, I did feel that the facility was so useful that I resented being restricted to just two mathematical functions.

Backing up the mailing-list facility is an alphanumeric sorter which can be used for sorting out lists of names and addresses both by surname and, if some surnames are repeated, by a subsidiary field of information such as street name. Of more interest to writers and journalists is the ability to generate an index of sub-headings for each file as a report is written, with the page numbers automatically recorded for easy reference.

When reviewing a series of packages one of the indications of the merits of a program is how heroic you feel when you have made your way through one. In the case of Paperclip I hardly noticed any struggle at all. Bearing in mind the limitations of even a powerful home micro like the Commodore 64, as against the

(continued on next page)

Barbara Conway is a City columnist on the *Daily Telegraph*

● Circle No. 154

The 64K question

(continued from previous page)

IBMs and their like, this program kids you that your micro is a mini in many respects. Drawbacks include the fact that in-text format instructions swallow valuable memory and the minor grouse about the print files, but these are relatively faint damns in a praiseworthy professional package.

Easy Script

Before going into any detail about Easy Script I have a confession to make. This package, produced by Commodore, was the first to come out for the 64 and also the first I had ever used. Because there was a hefty time lag before anything comparable appeared, I had plenty of time to form a

near-sentimental prejudice in favour of Easy Script.

The program was originally written for the 64 and although the early manual I have refers to a cartridge it is actually on protected disc. The manual itself is a very hefty and well printed affair. It starts from scratch with plenty of pauses in the instructions to check that you have understood the lessons so far. Printer options are comprehensive and the screen colour can be changed, which in this case is just as well since it starts as a pretty depressing grey-and-white combination. The printer-choice menu is straightforward.

One of the beauties of Easy Script is that, although it possesses enough powerful features to stand up well against most of its more recent competitors, it comes very close to being idiot proof. It is one of the few programs where, in my earliest attempts to use it, I was not able to crash any files. It may be possible to do so, but short of accidentally turning off the machine I have yet to find out how.

The text is entered unformatted. The format instructions are fairly easy to learn, but as in so many of these packages they take up valuable text memory. The page can be viewed almost as it will be typed — with the exception of some special printer instructions where you have to guess the final appearance — with one simple output command and printed with another.

Files can be saved to tape or disc and editing in format mode is a single-key operation. Disc directories can be viewed without danger to unsaved text, and files already stored can be appended to those currently in the machine with little problem except memory size.

Text manipulation is catered for well, and for report work there are facilities for both horizontal and vertical tab settings. Using the basic 40-column screen can be awkward for that function, but the screen does scroll horizontally in the video-output mode, which lets you see if you have worked out the tabs properly.

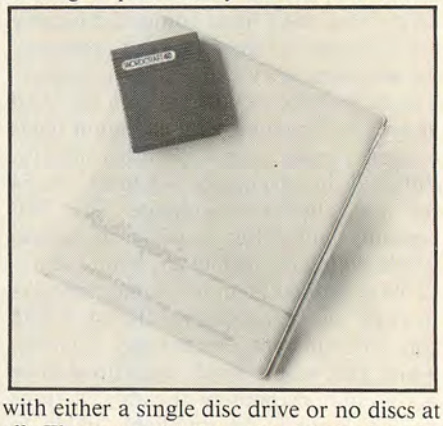
Files can be linked for global printing when required with a simple format instruction. Search and replace can be used, although there is some scope for confusion here, and chunks of text can be shifted around the file. Headings and page numbers are also catered for. The mail-merging facility can cope with most needs and requires little practice to produce a standard letter suitably printed out with different addresses and salutations.

Easy Script also has a matching spelling checker, Easy Spell. Although it lives up to its title for simplicity of use, it soon palls. To use it properly there are so many fiddly disc-switching operations that after a while you just stop bothering. It is not difficult, but it is irritating.

Wordcraft 40

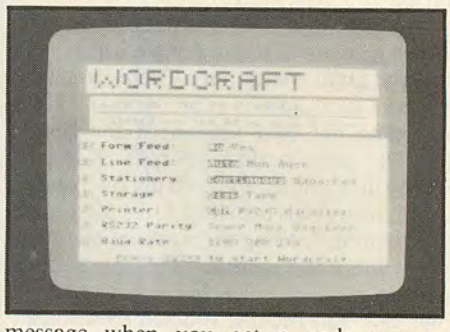
An established star adapted from the Pet Wordcraft 80, this is the package with almost everything — including the biggest price tag of the lot. It is an undeniably excellent program, but with so much high-powered competition around it is hard to justify its cost.

Wordcraft 40 comes on cartridge, making it particularly attractive to those



with either a single disc drive or no discs at all. The manual is in a ring binder but the copy with my package was very badly printed, which detracted substantially from the quality of the contents. As with many of the manuals, it starts from the very beginning, assuming little or no knowledge of the medium. Its first step is to make sure that the equipment is properly connected before powering-up.

An idiot-proofing measure within the program is a flashing screen and error



message when you get a code wrong. Although it is possible to crash text while performing disc operation, the screen does warn you of the risk when it occurs.

When entering text you toggle painlessly

	Horizontal scroll	Auto-format	Lines of text per file	Numeric mode	Search and replace	Global print	Price	Supplier and phone number
Easy Script	Y	*	764		Y	Y	£75	Commodore (0753) 7929
Paperclip	Y	*	829	Y	Y	Y	£86	Kobra Micro Marketing (049) 122512
Quick Brown Fox	Y	Y	800		Y	Y	£60	SPT Electronics (0621) 868484
Script 64		*	‡	Y	Y	Y	£78.25	Impex Designs 01-900 0999
Simply Write			699		Y	Y	£35-£40	Simple Software (0273) 504879
Wordcraft 40	Y	Y	341		Y	Y	£89.95	Audiogenic (0734) 586334
Wordpro 3-Plus/40			329	Y	Y	Y	£80	Wego Computers (0833) 49235
Vizawrite	Y	Y	875		Y	Y	£69	Viza Software (0634) 813780

*final format can be output on video
‡ stores screen by screen up to 99 A4 pages

between typing and editing modes. The screen layout is clear, with format instructions for page width and length in the status line away from the text itself. Text is formatted as you write. Operations such as centring are made unusually simple. One minor point which took some getting used to was the command for a new line at the end of a paragraph. Most 64 programs use the Return key for this, but Wordcraft 40 makes use of one of the function keys instead. Full marks go to Audiogenic for some nice friendly touches in the manual, like the suggestion of taking a break after the first few sections. The computer equipment may not have been overheating but the user, suffering from a surfeit of word processors was quite near to it and appreciated the thought.

Text manipulation is much the same as that on other full-function packages. The Insert mode is a little idiosyncratic, opening up patches of 61 characters apiece, which close after the text is typed in rather than simply letting you type in however much new text you need and then returning to normal. There are no complications over shifting blocks of text, repeating blocks, search and replace and other similar operations. Naturally at this price, there are full header and footer facilities.

Disc and printer instructions are comprehensive and, in isolation, Wordcraft 40 would be very attractive. But with the likes of Paperclip around, it does not quite justify the price.

Quick Brown Fox

As a reasonably kindly soul, and one who was given a great deal of help and professional courtesy by SPT Electronics, I find myself in a real quandary over this package. There was one thing about the unit I received that I really liked; unfortunately, it wasn't the word processor.

My copy came complete with a large box of tricks which, when inserted into the cartridge port, gave me the one thing that I yearned for on my 64 — an 80-column screen. It will not work on an ordinary

television, and definition on my colour monitor left something to be desired, but on a green monitor the effect was very impressive. The cartridge allowed the word processor to be switched out so that the 80 columns could be used in normal programming.

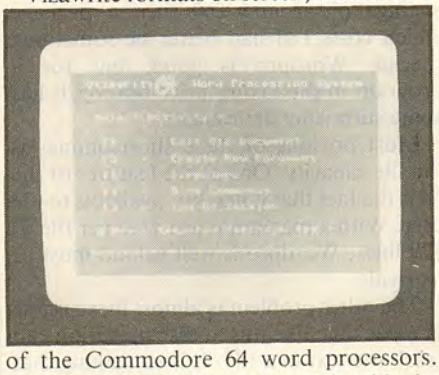
So much for the good news. As far as the word processor itself is concerned, I can only report that I am baffled. It has most of the right features, but someone seems to have decided to make them as fiddly and difficult to use as possible. Even relatively simple editing involves switching in and out of modes which seem designed to irritate. It is not difficult to do, but annoying when you are trying to get a decent flow of words going.

The manual, like the program itself, has all the right ingredients but the result is not a pretty sight. There may be places for its painfully jokey approach but a word-processor manual is not one of them. The actual instructions are reasonable enough, but the effort required to swallow the condescending tone renders them all but useless. I would use the 80-column board with pleasure, but only with the word processor permanently switched out.

Vizawrite

One of the earliest word processors produced for the 64, and very much in the "user friendly" category is also twinned with a spelling checker. It makes a rounded package well matched to the needs of heavy users such as myself.

Vizawrite formats on screen, unlike most



of the Commodore 64 word processors. Most people will probably use it with the 40-column page width for composition and a revised width for actual printing. The program scrolls across the screen automatically if you set for full page width, but I prefer to see large chunks of my text fully available to me as I write. Having only half the page visible makes me nervous. Perhaps it is a hang-up from more years than I care to think about of being a typewriter hack.

Format instructions are clear and are further explained in the admirably laid-out manual. You are allowed a generous amount of text per file. The program disc is heavily protected with no facility for making a back-up copy. Although Viza Software will replace a corrupted disc an y problems with it will mean that further writing depends on the speed of the company's response.

At least one facility on Vizawrite seems to be unique. The program actually admits the existence of other word processors and can merge its own files with sequential files from some of them — such as Commodore's own Easy Script. It is a nice touch and, for the likes of me who have many an Easy Script file, it is very practical.

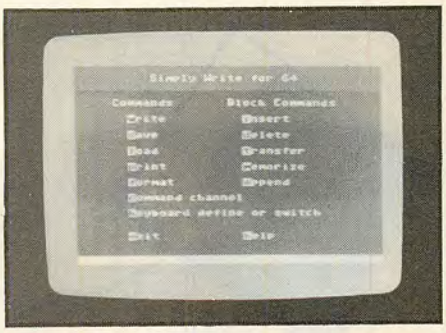
The display is averagely clean. Like most others, Vizawrite can change screen colours, which is a mildly attractive if hardly decisive facility. It caters without too much trouble for most likely printers. Disc access is straightforward, and disc operations such as reading the directory can be used in the middle of text operations without risk of losing the story so far.

If I had not used Paperclip I probably would not have noticed the fact that calculations and sorting operations are not catered for in Vizawrite. Most other needs are, in straightforward vein, so that complex editing including matters such as switching chunks of text are easy to get the hang of.

It took me some time to get used to the mailing operation, but once I got the hang of it there was no usage problem there at all. Although produced early in the life of the 64, Vizawrite holds up very well against most of its rivals. The spelling-checker option is a plus, particularly since it operates without undue fuss. Vizawrite is good value for money.

Simply Write

This is the cheapest package of the lot, but do not let that mislead you. It is startlingly good value for money. Simply Write comes on disc or tape with a relatively slender but workmanlike manual. Bearing in mind the prices its features are



remarkable. It can get along with any printer, disc handling is straightforward and the maximum text per file is just about double that of the most expensive program in this survey.

Almost all the text-manipulation requirements are there, including shifting blocks of text, page numbering, justification of text and centring. Better still, the commands are easy to memorise

(continued on next page)

The 64K question

(continued from previous page)

and use. Simple Software has even given it a colour-change facility — one of many features showing up the opposition.

It is not the best of the bunch, but a package at this level which offers linked files, mailing-list facilities with an alphabetical file sort, and the ability to view formatted text before printing has to be good value. For many home users, particularly if they want to use a word processor without the added expense of a disc drive, this is an ideal starter package.

Script 64

This is an unusual package in several respects, most notably because it is the only one currently on the market to include an integral spelling checker, a development which others look very likely to follow. Script 64 comes on disc with a well printed ring-binder manual which covers most of what you are likely to want to know, including a wide range of text and print-control functions.

The program is different from most of the others in that instead of performing the usual scrolling-up function when your text reaches the bottom of the screen window, it switches to the next screen. I found it less convenient than the conventional continuous scrolling text.

Printer choice is liberal and disc commands are clear. The program makes the most of the text memory available by not cluttering it up with format commands. They are enclosed in special control maps which can cover either an entire file of up to 40 screens or each individual screen. A special structured-screen format exists to deal with technical documents or charts. There is a numeric mode, once again with calculations limited to addition and subtraction. Keys can be redefined and files linked globally.

The star turn is definitely the spelling checker. You have to create your own dictionary disc, and building up a suitable vocabulary is a little tiresome, but that applies to any such program. If you need this facility — and most home users probably will not — Script 64 is the obvious choice.

Impex designs is also now marketing another package, which I have not had the chance to test, called The Word. Again it is not for the majority of home users, but since it is based on Paperclip run on an 80-column board it sounds a good option for those likely to need a word processor for heavy use. A database is included and the package costs £195. The price puts it way out of the normal range, but if you can make use of the facilities it could turn out to be fair value.

Wordpro 3-Plus/64

When the majority of word processors available for the Commodore 64 cost an average of around £60 then a package which costs £80 had better be something special. Wordpro is good, but for a program in the luxury price bracket it has some surprising deficiencies.

Most obvious of these shortcomings is the file capacity. One of the features of the 64 is the fact that it has 39K available to the user. With a maximum text area per file of 329 lines, Wordpro is well behind most of its rivals.

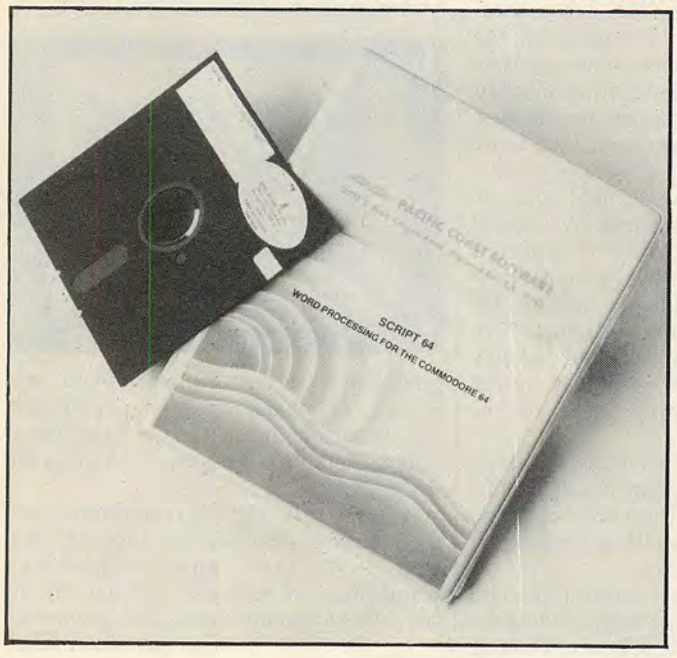
The other problem is almost inexcusable in a package like this: a disc operation can crash the text in a file. It is something that most other packages have either prevented or at least provided insistent warnings about. The package includes a copy-protected disc and a comprehensive manual which manages to cater for the absolute beginner without being unduly patronising.

However, the text is not formatted as typed, which is par for the course. And although there is no problem in getting it to print out a full page width, the screen will not scroll horizontally across 80 columns to show you exactly what the printer will produce.

The printing output is straightforward but I met a hitch here that may be worth recording. Wordpro accepts different printers but it will only recognise a printer if it is attached to the computer by the serial bus. That left my Epson, using a Centronics ribbon connector, feeling distinctly unloved when I tried to output text. Assuming that your printer is connected acceptably, Wordpro has the facility, matched by Paperclip, to print up to 255 copies of any text without any further complications and separately from the mailing-list operation.

There are no complaints about text manipulation, including erasure, switching, duplication, etc., or about the ease of disc operations — always remembering the real risk of losing text while reading a directory. The main program has 329 lines of text for files, but there is an Extra Text mode for frequently used material and mailings. The ability to key in often-used text is one area in which Wordpro beats Paperclip, since the more expensive package can extend this function to cover several lines against Paperclip's maximum of one line. Wordpro will also let you key in an abbreviation which the program will change to the full word when you include it in the text.

Wordpro matches Paperclip's numeric functions, with the ability to set up columns and perform addition and subtraction with them. But it goes no further than Paperclip in this and, bearing in mind the vast price difference, looks on balance to be the less attractive of the two.



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Enhancing dBase II

If you judge a product by the number of add-ons produced for it Ashton-Tate's database package must be a winner. Mike Lewis tries some of them out.

ASHTON-TATE'S DBASE II has been on the market for less than three years. Yet a veritable sub-industry has grown up around it. There are firms that will sell you dBase courses, dBase consultancy, books on dBase and, inevitably, a clutch of software products which claim to enhance and improve the original program. Some of these add-on programs will indeed make life easier for the dBase user. But most of them appear to do little that you cannot do for yourself with minimum effort.

Perhaps the leader in the field is Fox & Geller, an American software house that has recently set up shop in central London. It has three dBase-oriented products: dUtil, which provides a rag-bag of functions for the dBase programmer; dGraph, a graphics program which I have come to like a lot; and its best known product, Quickcode, which is grandly claimed to be a program generator.

Quickcode

Quickcode does indeed generate programs, but they are very limited in what they can do. What you end up with is a simple set of dBase command files that create and maintain a single database. It is adequate for a few simple applications, but the process lacks flexibility and fails to take advantage of the power of dBase II. To use Quickcode, you describe your application in terms of a data-entry form. A simple editor places field captions, instructions and boxes on the screen, exactly as you wish them to appear to the end-user. To specify an input field, you type a semicolon followed by the field name.

There is the usual set of cursor-control and editing keys to help you design the form. In fact, Fox & Geller allows you to assign any keys you like to the various control and editing functions, a practice which more software publishers should follow. You can use these keys to juggle things around on the screen until you are happy with the way they look.

To describe the input fields in more detail you enter Quickcode's field mode. It presents you with a table setting out the characteristics of each field that you have

put on the screen. Some of the entries in this table are filled in by default; others are initially blank.

Using the same control keys, you go through the table filling in the entries, or altering existing ones. In this way you define the lengths of the fields, their types, validation criteria, and other characteristics. You can go back and forth between the data-entry screen and the field table as often as you like, altering things as necessary. You can also save the whole thing to disc for later recall.

When you are satisfied with your screen and the fields, you tell Quickcode to generate the programs, which is completely automatic. It also produces an empty database, and a print file containing an image of the screen for documentation purposes. The generated programs form a menu-driven system for running from within dBase. You can use these programs to add records to the database, and to retrieve and amend existing records using the data-entry screen that you specified in Quickcode. There are also functions for printing reports and for setting up a data file for processing by WordStar and Mailmerge.

The best thing about Quickcode is that it is indeed quick. It took me less than an hour to generate a sample order-processing system, and the actual program generation took under three minutes. The problem is that the generated programs can really only do one thing — maintain a single file. This might be fine for, say, a mailing list. But if that is all you neeed to do you may be better off with a simple filing system such as Micropro's Datastar or Caxton's Cardbox.

Most serious programmers would find Quickcode too limiting for anything other than rough-and-ready applications. You have very little control over operator messages, and none at all over disc usage. I like to put plenty of Help screens in my programs, which you can easily do in dBase, but in Quickcode you would have to amend the generated code. Although it is easy enough to do, it rather defeats the object of a program generator.

Friday

An alternative front-end system to consider is Friday. It is produced by Ashton-Tate, the publisher of dBase itself. Strictly speaking, Friday is not a dBase add-on becaus it functions quite independently of dBase. It is a very useful program in its own right, and provides a simple method of creating and maintaining dBase -type files. It gives you all the functions of Quickcode programs and a great deal more. Friday has many of the features of dBase, except that it is not a language. It is entirely menu-driven, and certainly easier for beginners to use.

dUtil

Fox & Geller's second offering is dUtil, a collection of utility functions for dBase programmers. This program is straightforward to use and reasonably fast, but it does very little that you cannot easily do by other means. The main feature of dUtil is its ability to merge subsidiary command files, which are like subroutines in other languages, into higher-level programs.

The theory is that this saves running time because it cuts down the disc accessing needed to call in the lower-level code. I found that this works well up to a point, although the time savings are quite small. The theory falls down when the main program has to call one of several different

subroutines, according to some conditions. To illustrate, consider the following coding:

```
DO CASE
    CASE CODE = "A"
        DO GETSALES
    CASE CODE = "B"
        DO GETCOSTS

etc. etc.

ENDCASE
```

If you put this through dUtil you would find that all the subsidiary routines had to be loaded with the main program, and each would need to be scanned by dBase. Without dUtil only the routine that was actually used would be loaded. So dUtil would slow the program down in this case, rather than speed it up. A better solution would be to use a macro call. You would rename the subroutines as, say, Geta, Getb, etc., then replace the entire Case statement by a simple Do Get&code. Unfortunately, dUtil cannot handle this construction.

Another problem with dUtil is that it could greatly increase the amount of disc space needed by the programs. It can also cause difficulties with Return statements in subroutines. When these are brought up to the high level, they will cause a branch to the wrong place. At least, the accompanying manual warns you of this problem and gives advice about dealing with it.

Other dUtil functions include: expanding keywords and converting them to capitals, putting indents into a program to emphasise its structure, adding comments to Endifs and Enddos, and outputting a tree diagram for a set of linked command files. I suppose some dBase users would find these moderately useful, but I doubt if many would consider it worth paying £69 for them.

dGraph

By contrast Fox & Geller's third product, dGraph, although not cheap, is worth every penny of its £200 purchase price. My initial reaction to this graph-drawing utility was that it would be too limited for most users. But dGraph has hidden depths, and once I started using it I began to realise its power.

On the surface, dGraph is a simple program that will draw four different types of diagram: bar charts or histograms; line charts, such as a time series; pie charts; and a sort of rectangular pie chart called a piebar figure. The main limitation is that the diagrams are fixed in size at roughly half an A4 sheet.

To use dGraph at its simplest level you type in an array of figures — up to four columns and 52 rows — then tell the program to start drawing. dGraph will use default settings to produce a take-it-or-leave-it diagram, but the fun begins when you start specifying your own settings. You can choose the type of shading, the symbols to use as markers, reverse — white on black — printing, and various headings, titles and legends. You can zoom on to a small part of the graph; you can merge text with graphics; and you can plot averages and cumulative values on the same axes as the basic data.

So what has all this to do with dBase? If you tell dGraph to get its data from a dBase file it will access the file structure and let you use the fields and records to define the graph. You can perform arithmetic on the fields, select records, and much more. It is very powerful, but also very easy to use. My only complaint is that the manual makes the process look more complicated than it is.

But dGraph is in no way tied to dBase and you can use it as a stand-alone program. It incorporates a rather crude text editor for keyboard entry of data, or you can pass data to it in the form of a file. It makes it easy to link it to prgrams in other languages.

From the system developer's point of view, dGraph has some useful features. You can separate the process of defining the graph from the actual drawing, so the end-user can call up a pre-defined graph simply by typing a CP/M command line such as

```
DGRAPH SALES CHART
```

You can use the dBase Quit command to

(continued on next page)

What is dBase II?

The cover of the dBase II manual bears the title *Assembly-Language Relational Database Management System.* Don't let this put you off — nothing could be further from the truth. dBase has nothing to do with assembly language. True, the program was itself written in assembler. But then, so was WordStar, CP/M and most Basic interpreters. So what? You certainly will not need to know assembler to use dBase.

Then there is the bit about relational databases. If you define a database as a method of storing data independently from the programs that use it, then dBase more or less fits the bill. But there is a lot more to relational databases than this — see "What exactly is a database?", *Practical Computing,* May 1983. dBase is a long way from being a true database package but then so are most of the products that rely on this overworked description.

In fact, dBase II — the II is part of the name but is usually omitted; there was never a dBase I — is a high-level programming language that is especially useful for applications involving filing, searching, indexing and retrieval. To give you an idea of its power consider the following dBase program:

```
USE ACCOUNTS
REPLACE ALL YEAR:TOT WITH YEAR:TOT + MNTH:TOT, MNTH:TOT WITH 0 FOR
  TYPE >2 .AND. ACTIVE = "YES"
```

Yes, this really is a complete program. It opens a file, reads each record in turn, tests for certain conditions, updates two of the fields in the record, rewrites the updated record, tests for end of file, closes the file, and returns control to the calling program. Not bad for two program lines. dBase programs tend to be so short that many users manage without them altogether. They simply type the commands as and when they need them.

But like all languages, dBase has its weaknesses. In particular, it is completely useless for any type of table handling or subscripting. Its string manipulation is minimal, and it has no floating-point arithmetic.

It is in file handling that dBase really shines. It has high-level commands for indexing, searching, sorting and joining — comparing two files and extracting a common subset. And the programmer never has to worry about the structure of a file, all references being by field name.

Add to this the dBase commands for screen handling and report writing, and you begin to realise why this is such a popular tool. Few users would claim that it is ideal. It still has bugs and it can be infuriatingly slow. There are also many look-alike packages on the market, some of them quite good. But as a method of producing ready-to-use systems as quickly as possible, dBase II is hard to beat.

(continued from previous page)

link dGraph with a dBase menu, allowing the user to select a graphics option without being aware that a separate program is in use.

One snag with dGraph is that you need a printer with bit-mapped graphics. The program supports a range of popular matrix printers, but there is also an option for writing a bit image of the graph to disc. A competent programmer could easily write a program for printing this file to any suitable hardware, including a bit-mapped screen or, at a pinch, a plotter.

dBPlus

While dGraph will find a ready market among non-dBase users, Humansoft's dBPlus package is firmly aimed at the dBase fraternity. It has three functions, each of which neatly exploits a weakness in dBase itself. Firstly, there is a program for sorting dBase files. Humansoft claims this to be up to 15 times faster than the Sort command within dBase. I did not carry out any exact timings, but sorting in dBase is so slow that I can readily believe it. The strength of the dBPlus version is that you can sort on as many fields as you like in a single pass. In dBase you can only sort on one field at a time.

Even so, this feature is nothing to get excited about. I suspect that most dBase uses avoid sorting at all costs, preferring indexes instead. This is not only faster than sorting, it is much more flexible. In dBase, you can combine fields, sub-fields and constants in almost any way to produce indexes. And you can arrange for an index to be updated automatically as records are added and deleted.

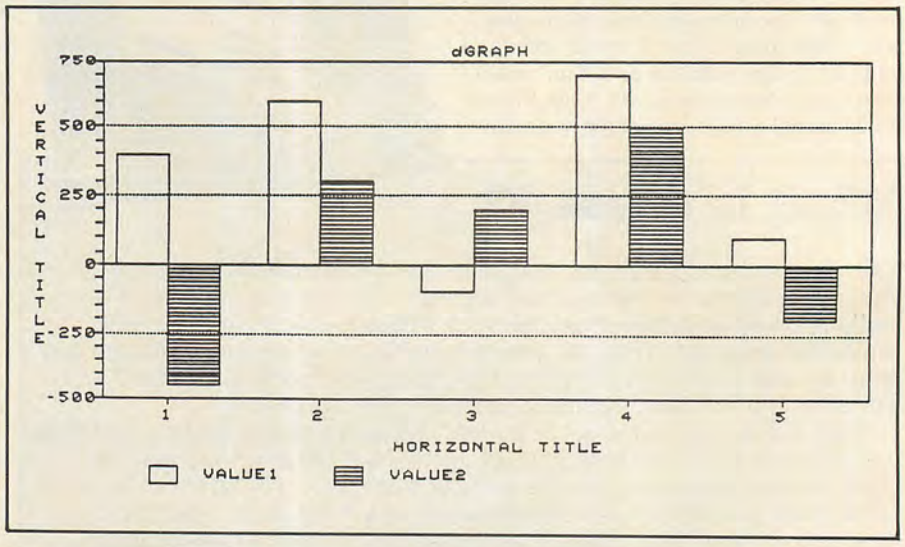
The second dBPlus function is used to compress a dBase file, with the aim of saving disc space for back-up and archive copies. It takes advantage of the fact that dBase uses a full byte to record each character, digit, flag, sign and decimal point in its files. DBPlus uses a much more efficient method. I did not achieve the savings of 70 percent that Humansoft claims, but I can imagine that such savings are possible in the most favourable circumstances.

The snag is that you can only use the packed version of the file for archives and security. dBase cannot itself access this copy, and you have to reverse the process in order to process the file an any way. Fortunately, it takes no longer than normal file copying.

The third dBPlus function is called Transform. It is a menu-driven version of dBase's Modify Structure command. It does not appear to do anything that you cannot do in the dBase verson, but it is certainly simpler to use.

Runtime

Finally, Ashton-Tate has a product that will be warmly welcomed by software houses who wish to sell dBase packages off the shelf. Up to now, such firms have had



Books about dBase

When you buy dBase II, you get a 188-page A4 typeset manual. It is reasonably well written, carefully organised, and full of examples. True, the typography is a little peculiar — the most recent edition has funny little diamonds instead of quote marks. But most people manage to understand much of the text, which, by the standards of our industry, can only be described as excellent.

Still, there are a lot of writers about who think that they can do better. No doubt some of them can, so you can expect to see books about dBase appearing in your local bookshop or computer retailer from now on. One such writer is Adam Green. Mr Green is the head of an American firm called Softwarebanc, a consultancy that specialises in dBase applications. He is the author of *dBase II User's Guide*, published by Prentice-Hall at £24.65.

Of this book's 150-odd pages, some 45 are devoted to a sample set of programs all clearly explained and nicely commented. They show Mr Green to be a system designer and programmer of the old school — one who plans his application carefully before putting his fingers on the keyboard. If you are new to programming you would do well to study these samples. The programs are for keeping track of donations to a college, but they will serve as a model for many other applications. They also neatly illustrate many dBase techniques.

Alas, Mr Green's undoubted skill as a programmer does not spill over into his writing; the book itself is not well written. I suspect that someone who finds dBase hard to understand will be even more confused after reading this volume. An experienced dBase user will learn nothing from it either.

But the worst thing about this book is the appalling typography. It has been printed on a daisywheel typewriter, with absolutely no thought to its appearance. The page layout is sloppy to say the least, and typing errors abound. Using word processors to create camera-ready copy in this way is becoming quite common, and there is no excuse for not making a good job of it. Take a look at some of Digital Research's recent manuals to see how well it can be done. The surprising thing is that a firm with the prestige of Prentice-Hall should agree to let the book out in this condition. And to charge nearly £25 for it is nothing short of an insult.

A much better bet is *Everyman's Database Primer* by Robert Byers, published by Ashton-Tate at £12. Although not a small book at 300 typeset pages, it is very easy to read. Mr Byers has a good writing style, and you will zip through it.

Although he sets out to describe the theory of databases, the author uses dBase II for all his concrete examples and illustrations, which is not surprising when you consider who the publishers are. I would not be surprised if an intelligent newcomer to computers was able to learn to use dBase from this book alone.

I would go further and say that this book provides a very useful introduction to computers in general. It will take the reader from the basic idea of organising data through to some fairly advanced programming concepts, and all at a very easy pace. I recommend it.

two big problems. First there was the question of cost. To use a package a user had to buy dBase as well, and this greatly increased the cost of the application. Then there was the fact that the developer had no way of protecting his source code.

Ashton-Tate's Runtime package overcomes both these problems. It consists of two programs: dBCode, which crunches a batch of command files in such a way that they cannot be read by a human; and dBRun, which executes the crunched programs. To the end-user, the application looks exactly the same as if it was being run under dBase proper. The difference is that the user no longer has access to the dBase command line. He can only run the programs that he has purchased. And because dBRun can be licensed at a much lower price than the full dBase package, off-the-shelf systems work out much cheaper to buy.

dBase II is now firmly established as the leading database-management language, and there is likely to be a big increase in the number of ready-made packages in dBase. Another growth area will be in application packages that have no connection with database management, but that nevertheless includes an interface with dBase files. Ashton-Tate's Financial Planner is a good example. It is a modelling language, with a Read command that can access dBase data. And I know of at least one payroll that permits the user to pick up details of bonuses and overtime from dBase.

Conclusions

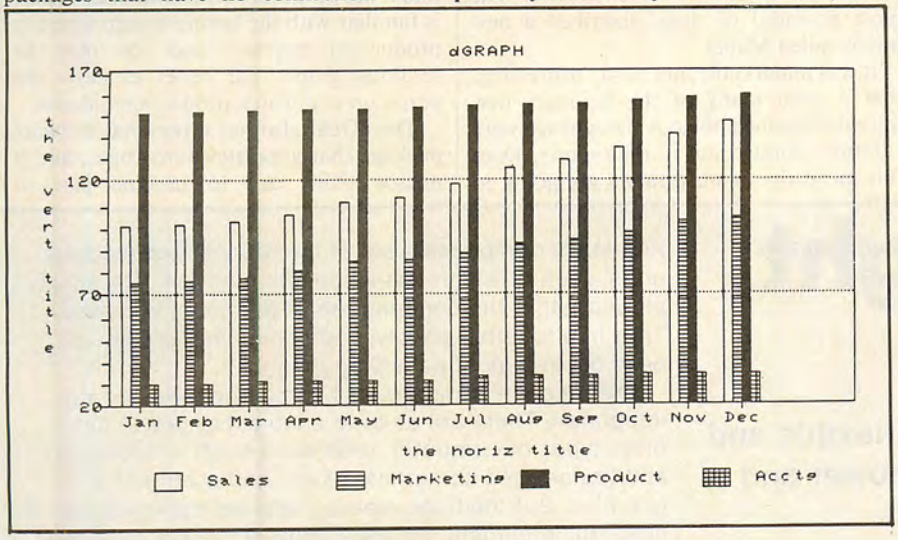
● With dBase II gaining a dominant position in the database market, the growth of add-on programs, compatible languages and off-the-shelf applications has been inevitable. If a software product can be advertised as dBase-compatible, it has a head start.

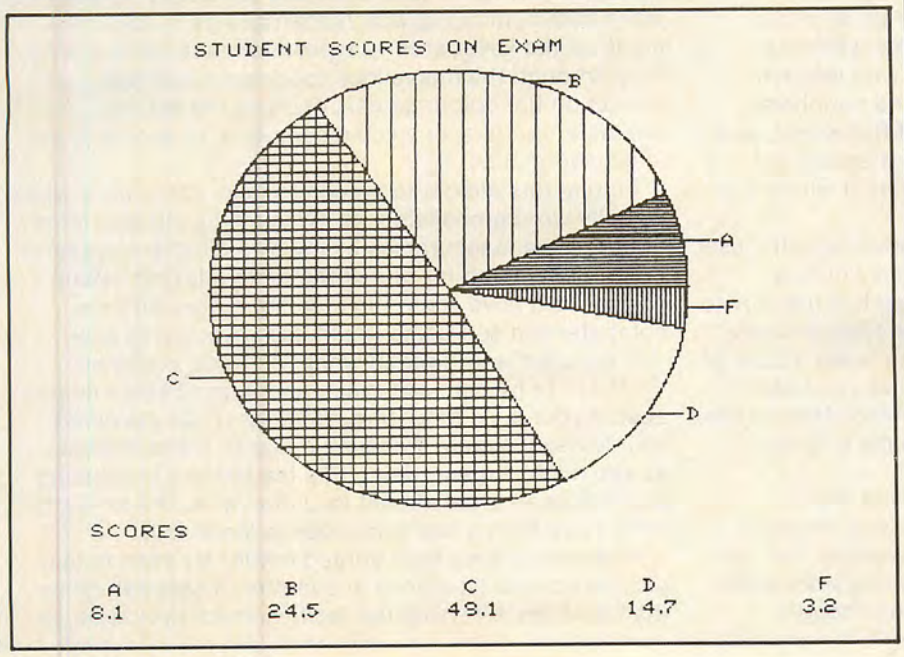
● Some of the add-on progams are useful and powerful systems in their own right. A good example is dGraph, which is likely to find a niche in the growing graphics market even among non-dBase users.

● Others are less useful. A typical reaction to dUtil or dBPlus might be: "Great program. So what?" These products do precisely what they set out to do, but provide little or nothing that cannot be achieved with a text editor or with dBase itself.

● If your database needs are extremely simple, a dBase program generator such as Quickcode might be worth looking at. But you would probably be better off with a single-file handler or with Friday, a sort of menu-driven version of dBase.

● The dBase Runtime package will be good news for vendors of application packages. It is likely to lead to more off-the-shelf products being written in dBase.





dBase products

Product: Quickcode
Description: A dBase program generator. You define an application in terms of a data-entry screen. Quickcode generates a menu-driven set of dBase programs that use this screen format for adding data to a file and performing basic file maintenance.
Publisher: Fox & Geller, 17 Wigmore Street, London W1, Telephone: 01-580 5816
Price: £200

Product: Friday
Description: A file-manipulation system aimed at first-time micro users. It has many of the features of dBase, and its file are dBase compatible. But it is completely independent of the dBase language and no programming knowledge is required.
Publisher: Ashton-Tate, Cofferidge Close, Stony Stratford. Telephone: (0908) 568866
Price: £190

Product: dUtil
Description: Various utility functions for dBase programmers.
Publisher: Fox & Geller
Price: £69

Product: dGraph
Description: A program for drawing histograms, true graphs, pie charts and piebar diagrams. It can be linked with dBase, used on its own, or interfaced with other programming languages.
Price: £200

Product: dBPlus
Description: Programs for sorting and compressing dBase files, and for altering file structures.
Publisher: Humansoft. There appears to be no official U.K. distibutor, but the package is usually obtainable through dealers.
Price: About £100

Product: Runtime
Description: A product which makes it possible for software publishers to market their dBase programs without having to sell dBase itself.
Publisher: Ashton-Tate
Price: Special licensing arrangements are available for software houses, etc.

Birthday surprise

We present the winner — and the best of the rest — from our anniversary competition.

FOR PRACTICAL COMPUTING'S fifth birthday this year we set a competition, with Commodore (U.K.) kindly donating £500-worth of prizes of the winner's choice. Having looked back at the developments in computing over the previous five years we asked what the computer of 1988 will be like? More specifically, we invited you to submit a short report of the sort we often publish as a preview — a brief review of a machine that is new and that we have not had the chance to subject to the extensive hands-on testing required by a proper review.

There were more entries than expected — nearly 90 — and they showed a wide variety of approaches. Some people tackled the assignment seriously, with predictably dull results. Others paid less scrupulous attention to the actual year of their new micro's launch, but explored areas in which micros might possibly develop. Yet others poked fun at the whole enterprise. The most po-faced of these described a new micro called Mabel.

It was remarkable, not to say depressing, that a great many of the visionary new micros contained obvious flaws which were carefully pointed out in the reports. Does this mean the manufacturers are going to continue to make cock-ups just like they do today? Obviously.

In case anyone is interested, the consensus is that the micro of the future will look rather like a small briefcase. When you open it up, the keyboard will be on the bottom and a full-size flat screen inside the lid. Brian Williams calls it the knee/desk PC, which is shorter than the Premier Executive Portable Work Station.

One of the many nice variations on this micro is the Deja Vu, on which A M Warburton reports. The most futuristic part of this new Commodore is that it contains graphics commands such as Arc, Dot, Draw and Colour. Notwithstanding the attractive drawings submitted the name is just too true for this type of micro. The Gavilan is expected to be with us "real soon now", and that already wraps up the 1988 hardware in a brief-case sized box.

It was good to see a sense of humour evident in many entries. J E Chesney took the logical step from today's infatuation with mouse operation and christened his micro The Cheese — well, its official title is the eQual. The point about this micro is that it has graph-driven software. Everyone is familiar with the boring system whereby production increases and you plot the resulting graph. Far better to move the graph up and watch production increase.

The eQual also has a personal software package that generates horoscopes, and if micros really are to become part of

The Thought Processor

Trevor Hatchett previews a flexible and elegant blend of hardware power and programming sophistication.

What marks this new computer apart from all of its competitors is its ability to communicate with mere humans with the same high efficiency with which it communicates with other computers and peripheral devices. For the novelty of the Thought Processor, as it is called, lies not merely in its massive memory, but rather in the uncannily intelligent manner in which it is used.

It has a vast chunk of RAM — inaccessible to the user — that is entirely for its own benefit, and which is completely under its own control. It uses this memory to store what it experiences and has a separate processor to constantly refer to and modify this increasing bank of data. As a result, after a few hours of use, you begin to feel that it is almost able to read your mind. And maybe that isn't far from the truth. For it certainly is a very intelligent machine.

However, let us first take a quick look at the appearance of the system. The rather bland, timeless appearance belies the thought and cleverness that has been put into the system. What your own system looks like depends very much upon you, for the Thought Processor comprises a set of interconnecting modular units, each of which has a specific function. You simply plug together the combination of parts that you need. They clip together solidly, and come apart readily, if need be, in a most satisfying manner.

The range of peripherals is comprehensive and well integrated. There are units to enable it to talk to most other types of computer, receive all kinds of broadcast and transmitted communications, and scan text and graphics. But the huge memory and the extensive use of powerful intelligent software make it most impressive when communicating with human beings. It accepts input via the keyboards — typewriter, musical or graphic — or through the marvellous touch-sensitive high-resolution flat colour screen, or using the optical-character readers, or voice-recognition, or simply by the executive mouse.

I found this almost too much to take, particularly while verbally word processing, as I was mildly rebuked for my grammatical inaccuracies by my own disembodied voice. I eventually opted for one of the more relaxing default voices. I did have some fun creating a duet with my computerised self using the music keyboard as well.

It will also learn to read what you write, eventually. You have to be neat and clear, and it takes some time to absorb your style of writing, but once it has mastered your idiosyncracies, it doesn't make as many mistakes as you might expect. Using this feature is a chastening experience — I had almost forgotten what it was like to write more than a few sentences in longhand.

However, it does read printed matter far more readily, picking up new typefaces in a matter of seconds rather than minutes. It retains the facility, should you wish, to

everyday life that has to be a logical development. If the software also generated page 3 girls then the eQual could replace the *Sun*. One last question: why is it called the eQual? Because no one would buy it if it was called the Superior.

James Bryant and Dave Kress of Analog Devices submitted a report on the Commodore Playmate complete with flat screen colour display and Smalltalk: all eminently sensible. However, they also suggest the machine will have a BT-approved modem. This is just too futuristic for 1988. Sorry, we have to draw the line somewhere.

But given that in 1988 everything electronic will be interconnected with everything else, R J Collins has a fascinating way of increasing programming power. His Googol-flop machine is based on the knowledge that with millions of micros around, CPU time far exceeds user time — just the reverse of the mainframe days. Thus the CPU only needs the facility to lock into any number of other inactive units inside a predetermined neighbourhood to increase its power by parallel processing.

If a program took an hour to run, the CPU would simply borrow 500 free units round the country and finish the job in a few seconds. Mr Collins notes: "The rather novel design philosophy has some interesting applications — as sales increase, so does the power of any given system. This means that if you buy the first system now, by 1997 it will be 10,000 times more powerful."

Another novel approach to hardware was taken by Malcolm Phillips, S Hayward and others. Considering what Honeywell has already achieved with its integrated helmet and display sighting system, IHADSS, for military pilots, couldn't the computer of the future use similar technology? In other words, the micro could be worn like a helmet. Mr Hayward's Capo 1 computer solves the problem of kids sitting passively in front of the computer all day. They can wear it out instead.

Malcolm Phillips suggests a more distributed type of machine. The hardware sits over the shoulders like a Bone Phone stereo. The RAM is knitted into your jumper, while the screen image is created inside the lenses of a pair of spectacles.

However, it must not go unrecorded that, according to Alan Burns, 1988 is the year when Russia enters the £100 micro market. "The whole outfit is in a very solid leatherette-covered steel case .... The first impression is that one is looking at a very old-fashioned typewriter, owned by a mad wire-maker." Sounds as though Mr Burns owns an early-model Russian camera. Nevertheless, the Apparatchik works well and will give years of service.

In general, most of the hardware developments for 1988 look logical; 256K or 1Mbyte RAM chips as standard, built-in hard micro-floppies offering megabytes of storage, built-in printers and large flat display screens. All this technology is on the horizon; it just needs to be made smaller and a lot cheaper to become the stuff of everyday life.

But it is software that offers the more exciting developments. Current projects such as integrated operating systems, megabytes of Lisa-like software offering user-friendly operation, plus the millions of pounds/dollars/yen being thrown at the twin problems of expert systems and artificial intelligence must surely produce some dramatic improvements in these areas.

While Smalltalk is a very popular programming language in 1988, other new languages have been invented. RCade, mentioned by A W Cowley, is obviously a must for games writers.

R A Humphries notes that other popular languages are Fifth and Limp, along with the software packages Mega Cardbox and The Very Last One. His micro, incidentally, is the Multimate from the Sinclair subsidiary ICL — hence called Sinicle — and Mr Humphries notes that its main rivals in the market are the Oak Meson and the ITV Coronation. He may jest, but truth is often stranger than fiction. Forth would have been called Fourth if six-letter file names had been allowed, so Fifth

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reproduce on the silent high-resolution colour printer a more than reasonable facsimile of the acquired type style, with all the usual graphic manipulations available from the software resident within the printer.

But where I suspect the designers have scored an enormous direct hit with consumers is having created a machine that has the ability to run software, not only from all of the various forerunners from its own manufacturer, but also from almost any of the recently popular micros. This ability has already earned it the nickname The Sponge, but it does mean that you can use nearly all the software that is currently available.

There is obviously no need for you to completely get rid of your own old system. Just transfer what you want into the Thought Processor and you can retain the benefit of all the time and hard work you already put in. No programs are lost, there is no data to re-enter: the Thought Processor takes it all in its stride.

It is a remarkable machine to work with. If you are writing, composing, drawing or programming, it imperceptibly anticipates, corrects and guides you in a most constructive way, because over time, it detects and remembers the way that you tend to think. Consequently you can work very quickly and accurately.

To prevent you getting into too much of a rut, the designers have also provided a kind of random free-association mode that can help you brainstorm your way out of trouble or predictability. In all it is a machine I should want to work with for the foreseeable future, even at the current rate of progress. But who knows what might be dreamed up next? Even five years ago, something like the Thought Processor would have been thought impossible.

Mabel

Personal computing takes a quantum leap with this revolutionary system, previewed by Roger Peacock.

Five years ago, the Apple Lisa system made a genuine attempt to open another route with its emphasis on interaction with the machine on a more practical and "real" level. Its approach did not divert other makers from their quest for miniaturisation, but it did prompt two young designers from Cambridge — home of de Bono's lateral thinking — to start work on Mabel.

They firstly renounced virtually every single design parameter passed down intact from the earliest Pets and Tandys, and started from scratch to build a truly "user-friendly" system. At its official press launch on Friday, I saw journalists visibly trembling with excitement at the greatest breakthrough in personal computing since the chip itself.

The first striking thing about Mabel is its physical appearance — a large, slate-grey metallic cabinet standing about three feet high on the floor and covering a rectangular area of six feet by three feet. No screen, keyboards or disc slots were in evidence, and the only clue to the use of this monolith was the tunnel area in the centre of one long side where the user places his or her legs comfortably to operate the equipment.

The demonstration began, and eyes began to widen as the really radical nature of Mabel's approach became apparent. The flat top surface of the console turned out

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is logical. There is already a language called Extended WSFN — "which stands for nothing".

But who, in 1988, is going to sit around writing programs? D J Hague has a good idea: the people who do it now. Hence the most important feature of his Cerebus 32 micro, from the CBM/Sinclair consortium, is the Mimic mode, in which it will imitate most of the computers of the early 1980s. Mr Hague points out that this satisfies the growing market in pioneer hardware: "... with many clubs devoted to the specialised aspects of microcomputing, where aficionados speak machine language and think in hexadecimal. Only five years ago, remember, these mysteries were already redundant knowledge, mastered for no other reason than the glow of achievement, plus a remote chance of making some money."

Mr Hague also notes that "with the Mime key down, Select Commodore 64 pressed, the screen powered up with the near-forgotten border and

64K RAM SYSTEM
38911 BASIC BYTES FREE,

followed by a refusal to accept programs from an old disc I still had around." Ah, those were the days.

With so many fascinating — and diverse — entries it was difficult to choose a winner. In the end the Editor awarded the prize to Trevor Hatchett of Stockport, Cheshire, for picking up the key points on the computer horizon. He gives us at least a glimpse of what could be in the future, while his ideas are solidly based in developments taking place today. Small consolation prizes have been sent to K B Cusson of Epson, Surrey for the Boxatrix, and Roger Peacock of Thetford, Norfolk for making us laugh with his account of Mabel.

We must do this again some time. Probably in 1988. µ

(continued from previous page)

to be the central operational area, to handle in a flexible manner most of the input and output, centred on a movable 12 in. by 8 in. plain white work area. Input involves a revolutionary cordless light-pen type implement designated the Program Entry Module. When the user places the Module against the white work area, it physically deposits layers of graphite which echo the input exactly. There are no fixed pixel positions so the system is capable of virtually infinite resolution. Multicolour graphics are simply a case of changing modules.

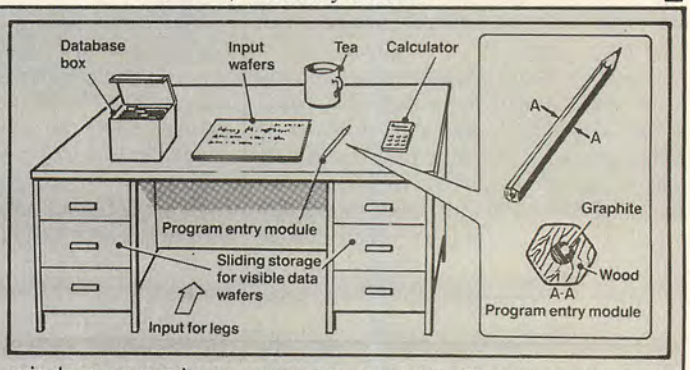
So much for graphic input, but how on earth have the designers coped with alphanumeric entry without resorting to more conventional hardware? The answer is refreshingly simple: the revolutionary principle of Direct Handwriting Recognition. While most microdesigners have been struggling for years with speech recognition, Mabel takes the alternative but totally effective route of allowing the user simply to write away on the white work area with the module. Every stroke, cross and dot is faithfully reproduced in the dark graphite with no hardware barrier between the user and the text.

Before the dumbstruck audience had time to draw breath, the demonstration proceeded from data entry to data storage. Surely this totally unconventional computer would have to fall back on more traditional facilities for the permanent retention of data? Not a bit of it.

The designers ran quickly over the well known shortcomings of magnetic storage: vulnerability — degradation, rough handling, etc. — and explained that one of the chief micro aversions still restricting computer acceptance was that an inability to see magnetic information leads to an inability to believe in its complete integrity. The answer for Mabel is probably the simplest yet most devastating of all — visible storage.

The journalists held their breath when this was demonstrated. The designers simply peeled off a 12in. by 8in. wafer from the white work area and held it aloft, showing the previously entered text and graphics still intact for all to see. Then in one deft movement a large cassette-like box slid from the console to the operator's right and in went the visible storage wafer, intact, visible and entirely non-volatile. Head-crashes, disc errors and power cuts were not going to affect that data, and the most suspicious non-computer cynic would have total faith in data in his or her own handwriting.

At this stage in the demonstration it had dawned upon everyone that Mabel is not merely another new computer but a complete overthrow of ever tenet of conventional



wisdom as we have come to accept it. Questions such as "Will it run CP/M?" Suddenly became a complete irrelevance, and larger issues such as Mabel's repercussions on the information revolution began to come to mind.

The designers have not been content to leave any area of the machine unchanged in their quest for friendlier operation. For example they have taken the Lisa screen calculator and given it real substance in the form of a remote numeric-pad-like mini-console which detaches from another storage cassette in the main console and on which a complete range of scientific and floating-point number crunching can readily be effected. A demonstration of a paperclip-type database was also given with another instance of total practicality, this time in the shape of a box-like container housing dozens of visible storage units, now on thicker wafers, which could be grouped using small metallic clips to give ready access to sorted files.

Software for the new system was briefly touched upon, but it appears that virtually every item of alphanumeric text ever published in English will form Mabel's software base and, by utilising the visible-storage principle, access to that base is immediate. The price of the actual system at around £100 brought gasps of sheer disbelief from the assembled gathering.

Predictions and forecasting in the micro world of 1988 is normally an area best avoided, but from what I have seen of this revolutionary new system I will go out on a limb and state that Mabel will change our lives. It could well be that within the next five years every schoolchild in the country from infant to student will have his or her very own Mini-Mabel at which to sit and at which all teaching will be conducted.

It is also now a real possibility that every town and local authority will start central town database facilities using the new visible storage, whereby any citizen can go along with a ticket and borrow visible files for consumption at home sitting at Mabel,

The Mabel recolution has only just begun!

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The sting in a micro's tail

Criminals are as eager as anyone to exploit the opportunities of information technology. Martin Edwards explains how they do it and how to stop them.

COMPUTER FRAUD is a major growth industry. The recent world-wide increase in crooked or near-crooked misuse of new technology has been spectacular. Yet for some reason this activity does not seem to attract the stigma that is attached to other kinds of crime. In the past few months, the mass media have been quick to recognise and to capitalise upon the trend.

The BBC TV serial *The Consultant* showed us a cunning bank-fraud scheme under investigation by a villainous anti-hero who happened to be an expert computer-security consultant. Having identified the *modus operandi* he neatly exploited it for his own benefit. Hollywood gave the subject a fresh and highly topical twist in the massively successful movie *War Games*. The film charts the progress of a teenage hacker from accessing into the school computer in order to improve his grades to tapping into the top-secret U.S. military computer that continuously plays war games. When the precocious youth becomes directly engaged in a deadly game of gobal thermonuclear war the results make riveting watching.

The Pentagon reckons that *War Games* could never happen in everyday life. Let us hope so. But the plot is not as distant from reality as one might think at first. Remarkable incidents of a comparable if less dramatic nature have already occurred.

It is not so long since a 15-year-old Westminster schoolboy cracked the security system of a London computer time-sharing service. Last year a group of teenagers from Manhattan worked their way into the Pepsi-Cola computer network, and wreaked havoc with the giant company's deliveries in Canada.

The upsurge of computer fraud stems from the rapid increse in opportunities for abuse of new technology. The computer plays such an important part in modern life that it would be surprising if it were not sometimes the context or means of the crime. It is the sheer scale of the problem that is beginning to cause so much concern.

A leading expert on computer security, Michael Comer, said in his book *Corporate Fraud*, which sets out many examples of computer crimes: "One good thing about computers is that they cannot steal, drive delivery trucks or climb ladders". All the same, the reasons why computer fraud is big business are easily explained.

The power and complexity of many computer functions make it possible to achieve massive gains from minute and virtually undiscoverable manipulations of programs. Colin Tapper, an eminent lawyer specialising in computer problems, has said: "The situation is one in which the opportunities are endless, the rewards unbounded, the techniques easy and the danger of detection minimal".

Computer fraud has been described by cynical American investigators as "equal-opportunity employment". The majority of computer frauds involve employees of the victim company, although some of the villains are business contacts or outsiders. Access to sensitive computer information can put a poorly paid employee in a position to take enough money to ruin his company.

Even if the would-be computer crook does not have any business training he need not despair, he can enjoy a vocational course in computers as part of the rehabilitation programme in any one of a number of U.S. penal institutions. No doubt this policy will soon be duplicated in English prisons.

There is absolutely no reason why computer fraud should be confined to major institutions or larger companies, nor is it. Small businesses with limited financial resources and consequently less elaborate security procedures are very much at risk. A small business computer may cost only a couple of thousand pounds or so and be capable of functioning in an ordinary office, run from the mains power circuit and operated by a clerk. A decade or so ago, a computer of comparable power might have cost hundreds of thousands of pounds and required special environmental conditions and an expert staff to run it. Not surprisingly, more and more firms are investing in hardware and programs to reduce administration and staff overheads, to increase productivity and to improve access to critical business information.

But there are risks in the brave new world. The investment will be counter-productive if new systems create new openings for vandals and other criminals. In the search for improved efficiency, many computer systems eliminate the separation of functions that once acted as a major check on crime.

Martin Edwards is a solicitor practising in Liverpool.

Such statistics as exist are alarming. According to a recent report from the Guaranteee Society, a subsidiary of the insurance company General Accident, new technology is helping dishonest employees to steal more than £2 million a day from their companies. Some estimates put losses world-wide from computer abuses in excess of £1,500 million a year.

Computer frauds come in a very wide variety of forms. In the United States, computer fraud has for a number of years been perceived as the dark side of technological progress. The Americans have developed a picturesque and rather idiosyncratic vocabulary of their own to describe the methods of computer vandals and criminals. The new jargon is loosely used at times, but by its sheer colour it conveys a striking image of the techniques that are now being employed.

The kind of unauthorised access graphically depicted in *War Games* may be considered as a variant of the well established phenomenon of piggybacking. The expression was originally devised to cover one type of computer abuse in the world of commerce. When someone using a distant terminal accesses the central processor, a line of communication is established. If the line is not properly closed down or terminated the next user to come on line may find that he is accessing files which are not his own.

The consequences of piggybacking can be highly embarrassing. In one case, two engineers based in Los Angeles accidentally used a password which was one digit different from the one allocated to them. The number happened to belong to the president of the computer bureau by whom they were employed. As a result, much to their surprise and gratification, they obtained direct access to highly confidential clients and financial data. The engineers went on to use the unlimited amount of computer time which the password made available to them in order to exploit the secret information.

Potentially even more damaging, is the

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Piggybacking stories abound — the film *War Games* takes them further.

use of so-called logic bombs to sabotage the system. On a number of ocassions disgruntled employees have programmed the company computer to perform a damaging function. The logic bomb may be triggered some time after the employee has left the company, perhaps introducing deliberate errors into the program or wiping clear valuable files.

Input data is particularly susceptible to the activities of the computer crook. The available studies show a preponderance of data diddling in the reporter cases. Although techniques vary with the circumstances of the case, the essence of data diddling is usually the creation of a false credit coupled with the concealment of a consequential debit, usually in an account where controls are not as tight as they should be.

Sometimes the object of manipulation is to hold back cash receipts, or the target area may be purchases. An example of the latter was the case involving an accounts clerk employed by a U.K. catering service. In collaboration with an accomplice who owned a grocery business he submited a series of false account numbers and invoices for undelivered food to the company's computer system. So successful were this pair that the sting continued for eight years, netting in excess of £50,000 before they were detected and convicted.

A villain with a more original cast of mind happened to be a senior executive in a U.S. company which distributed telephone equipment. The company's branches had dial-up facilities into the computer system at head office. The executive would place orders for the delivery of equipment to one of his company's remote warehouses, using his own telephone terminal and masquerading as a branch of the company. This gave the appearance of an internal stock movement that did not involve rendering a bill to an outside customer. The ingenious thief would then pose as a company driver, pick up the goods in a disguised van and sell them off. Again, he was eventually detected, but after serving a brief prison sentence it is reported that he made use of his experiences by setting up a computer-security consultancy!

Unauthorised alteration of computer programs is another widely recognised means of fraud. Program patches, known as "trap doors", allow an unauthorised user to exploit weaknesses in the design, logic or electronic circuitry of a system to defeat its security procedures. Information can then be drained off without leaving any trace of what has happened. When using an operating system with manufacturer-supplied software it is often impossible to guarantee that it contains no trap doors.

Among the other possibilities are superzapping, using a specially written program to bypass security controls so as to amend or reveal information contained within the system. In the Trojan Horse type of fraud parallel instructions are added, so that the computer carries out unauthorised functions while the program continues to perform in the expected manner.

Round-down frauds illustrate the way in which unauthorised patches can operate to the benefit of a thief, by diverting odd amounts such as fractions of a penny or a cent into an account in which he has an interest. In one case, a computer programmer at a bank in Hamburg, West Germany, embezzled almost 500,000 Deutschmarks from a large number of accounts. The unauthorised patch inserted into a transaction the query; "Is there an odd amount in the entry?" If the answer was No, the entry was processed correctly. If the answer was Yes, the odd amount would be deducted from the entry. The round balance was posted in the normal way to the proper account, while the odd amounts were transferred to the thief's account.

The Americans have nicknamed this highly effective slicing procedure as "salami" fraud. The individual sums deducted are so trivial that it is unlikely that their absence will be noticed. If the worst happens — from the criminal's point of view — and he is caught, the bank may in any event be reluctant to prosecute because of the adverse publicity which the case might attract.

Another potentially lucrative category of fraud involves the alteration of master-file data. The problem here is summarised by Michael Comer: "While many computer frauds are restricted to people within the computer centre, manipulation of master files is possible by many people within an organisation . . . To ensure that business practices stay flexible, master files have to be easy to amend. But this ease of amendment also means ease of fraudulent manipulation, either on data input forms or through program alternations."

A further attraction is that master-file information tends not to be subject to control to the same extent as transaction data. Thus it may be possible either to create a fictitious master file or to manipulate data on general files, for example by removing an overdraft limit or credit limit from the master file of a favoured customer.

An analyst employed by a British chemical company noticed that one of his employer's subsidiaries was not being allowed the standard discount for intra-group purchases to which it was entitled, but was being charged the full amount. In collusion with a buyer, he created a company of his own, which he set up in his employer's accounting system as a subsidiary. Supplies to the real subsidiary were made through the crooked subsidiary, which retained the discount. The thieves are reported to have made a profit of almost £200,000 in two years.

Clearly, one of the major problems is detecting when computer fraud has actually occurred. The case studies show that all too often a crime is only discovered by chance. The means used to perpetrate the crime may remain a mystery. Some businesses may be reluctant to report computer crimes because to do so may damage their credibility. United States law demands that computer crimes be reported, but this is not the case in Britain.

Nevertheless, it is no longer possible to hope that the problem will just go away. Businesses are arming themselves with a whole range of defences against computer fraud. They include more efficient personnel security procedures; improved controls on access to the system, whether direct or by remote terminal; eliminating weaknesses in system design; and spot check and routine security review procedures. The piggybackers, data diddlers and superzappers of this world are no latter-day Robin Hood. Their activities are selfish and destroy confidence in computers and commerce. Businesses suffer as a result and jobs are lost. Computer fraud is an evil of our time.

BBC shapes up

With John Leach's pair of Basic utilities you compose complex graphic objects on the screen, and move them at will within your own games programs.

A WHOLE CLASS of commands are available in BBC Basic to control output to the screen. They are prefixed by the characters "VDU" and replaced the screen Pokes used on other computers.

It is still possible to Poke to the BBC secreen using the ? command. But to do so you need to know the correct memory location and there is no guarantee that code of this type can be transferred unchanged to later upgrades of the system.

The VDU23 command can be used to establish user-defined characters, either within a program or as a direct command. It does not write directly to the screen memory, but to an area reserved for user-defined characters. Any characters defined in this way remain in memory until the computer is switched off. They will survive a Break interrupt, and even the loading and running of a new program.

The VDU23 command is followed by eight bytes representing the eight rows of an eight-by-eight pixel which makes up the character. The first byte is the top row. Each of the byte's eight bits corresponds to a specific pixel. A 1 turns on a pixel; 0 leaves a blank. The most significant bit represents the left-most dot. The VDU23 command accepts bytes as decimal or hexadecimal numbers. Thus 32 or &20 have the same effect, as they represent the same number in decimal and hexadecimal notation.

This is all very well, but it requires some mental agility to convert a spacecraft or even a simple triangle into the necessary set of decimal or hexadecimal numbers. The program I have written will do it all for you from a character you draw on the screen using the cursor controls.

Some interesting, undocumented features were used in the program. A few were discovered by examining the listings on the BBC's own demonstration tape, and others were picked up from scattered user group publications.

The *FX 4, 1 command allows the cursor keys to act as input keys without moving the cursor directly. As well as the cursor arrow keys, the Copy and Delete keys are used in the same way. The codes transmitted by pressing these keys can be used within a program.

An undocumented equivalent of the Peek command is used here to read memory for previously defined characters. The syntax on the BBC machine is:

I = ? MEMORY LOCATION

equivalent to Peek, and

?MEMORY LOCATION = I

equivalent to Poke.

In BBC Basic there lurks a trap for the unwary in the use of procedures. It is possible to enter a program and start running it and find that all is well for a while, until suddenly the dreaded No Room message appears and the program bombs out. This happens because a Procedure call creates a temporary demand for extra memory, and the more nesting of calls there is, the worse the situation becomes. It can be quite puzzling when, after exiting the program, you Print Himem and Lomem and find that you have 200 to 300 bytes free.

So when you enter the listed program be careful how you type it in. The initial version worked well until a deliberate error was entered. A call to ProcErr resulted, and this led to the display of the No Room message. Removing three spaces from the listing allowed sufficient space for the ProcErr call to be handled. The program is teetering on the edge of allowable memory, at least for the Model A, which is why there are no Rems, so do not put in extra spaces to make it look tidy. The program is documented in figure 1.

Save the program on tape, and then run it. It is useful to define

*KEY0 "RUN|M"

You will see an eight-by-eight square of yellow lines on a black background at the bottom of the screen. The screen background is white.

You are asked to enter the defined character's number, which must be betwen 224 and 255. When you press Return, the square fills up with the character previously defined by that number. It is displayed as red squares between the yellow grid lines. If you are running the program on a black-and-white television, the red squares do not show up well, so change the program to

Listing 1. Character generator.

```
  880REM *** Character Definition ***
  890
  900 DIM CHBYTE(7)
  910MODE5:@%=3:VDU28,0,11,39,0:COLOUR 1
:COLOUR 131: CLS:VDU24,192,0,128,0,192,2
,128,2:CLEARLINE$=STRING$(20," ")
  920VDU4:VDU30:FOR I%=0 TO 7:PRINT TAB(
0,I%);CLEARLINE$:NEXT I%:PROCPANEL
  930INPUT TAB(0,3)"Enter number >"NCHAR

  940IF NCHAR=0 THEN MODE6:GOTO 1060
  950 IF NCHAR<224 OR NCHAR > 255 THEN P
ROCERR:GOTO920
  960 FOR VT%=1TO 8:J%=1:K%=?(&0C00+(NCH
AR-224)*8+8-VT%):FOR HT%=8 TO 1 STEP-1:I
F(J%ANDK%)>0 THEN PROCBLOB(1,HT%,VT%)
  970J%=J%*2:NEXT HT%:NEXT VT%
  980 PROCMOVE:PRINT TAB(0,3)CLEARLINE$;
TAB(0,5);CLEARLINE$
  990 @%=1:FORI%=0TO7:CHBYTE(I%)=0:K%=12
8:FORJ%=0TO7:P%=POINT(224+J%*64,160+I%*6
4):IFP%=1THEN CHBYTE(I%)=CHBYTE(I%)+K%
 1000 K%=K%/2:NEXT J%:PRINT TAB(12,27-2*
I%);"&";
 1010 IF CHBYTE(I%)<16 THEN PRINT"0";
 1020 PRINT ~CHBYTE(I%):NEXTI%:@%=3
 1030 VDU23,NCHAR,CHBYTE(7),CHBYTE(6),CH
BYTE(5),CHBYTE(4),CHBYTE(3),CHBYTE(2),CH
BYTE(1),CHBYTE(0)
 1040 PRINT TAB(0,3)NCHAR;" = ";CHR$(NCH
AR);"   O.K. ";:INPUT Y$:IF Y$="" THEN M
ODE6:GOTO1060
 1050 IF LEFT$(Y$,1)<>"Y" THEN PRINT TAB
(0,5);"Continue entry":GOTO 980 ELSE GOT
O 920
 1060 PRINT:PRINT:FOR I%=0 TO 7:FOR J%=2
24 TO 248 STEP 8:PRINT I%+J%;" = ";CHR$(
I%+J%);"    ";:NEXT J%:PRINT:NEXT I%:END
 1070 DEF PROCPANEL:CLG:GCOL0,2:MOVE 192
,128:FOR I=192 TO 704 STEP 64:MOVE I,128
:DRAW I,640:NEXT I:FOR I=128 TO 640 STEP
 64:MOVE 192,I:DRAW 704,I:NEXT I
 1080 FOR I=13 TO 27 STEP 2:PRINTTAB(12,
I);"    ":NEXTI:ENDPROC
 1090 DEF PROCERR:PRINT TAB(0,6)"Error (
224 to 255)":T=TIME:REPEAT UNTIL TIME=T+
300:ENDPROC
 1100DEF PROCMOVE:REM MOVE CURSOR
```

define GCol 0,2 or GCol 0,3 instead of GCol 0,1.

When switched on, the operating system defines alternate sets of eight full and eight empty squares. You are now in the editing mode, and the point to be edited is shown by a small red cursor square, if the point is black, or a black square if the point is red.

You move the editing point around with the cursor arrow keys and enter a defined point by pressing Copy. If you try to move out of the square a Beep will wake you up. You can obliterate any point by pressing Delete. If you want to start over again press C, which clears the display, or F, which completely fills it with red. When you are satisfied, press Return.

Pressing Return does two things. First, the hexadecimal representation of the pattern is listed to the right of the square display so that you can copy it down for use in VDU23 commands in your own programs. Then the defined character is printed, and you are asked if it is OK. If you reply Yes you are asked for another number; if No you continue entry with the cursor controls. Before the character is Printed it must have already been entered into reserved memory.

One further command is available when you are in editing mode. If you enter N a message appears asking for a new number. When this is entered the character is assigned to that number, rather than the number you started with — provided it is within the range 224 to 255, of course. This facility can be used to build up a series of similar pixels without entering each from scratch. It could be particularly useful for producing animated figures.

A Return without a new number exits from the program, after listing the character set from 244 to 255, including those you have previously defined. If you want to make any further additions or changes, just run the program again.

Listing 2. Multi-character blocks.

```
100   PRINT TAB(X,Y): REM Start the block off at some point
110   FOR I%=1 TO 10: REM Or whatever
120   VDU 9,32,10,8,32,11,          Print 2 blanks at left
          N1,N2,N3,N4,              Print top row of pixels
          10,8,8,8,8,               Move down and backspace 4 left
          N5,N6,N7,N8,              Print bottom row of pixels
          8,8,8,8,8,11              Cursor back to top left
130   X=INKEY(DELAY): REM Slow down the movement
140   NEXT I%: VDU 30: REM Home cursor
```

At a later stage you can display the defined characters with

PRINT CHR$(N)

where N is the character number. Alternatively you can simply put VDU N1,N2,N3 . . . where N1,N2,N3 . . . is a series of defined characters. This is an economical way of displaying a block, and if you insert 8, 9, 10 or 11 in the series, to shift the cursor around you can display a complete block of defined characters in one command.

The example in program 2 shows how a block of four horizontal by two vertical previously defined characters can be moved very quickly across the screen. The listing is set out with comments on several lines for clarity, but in your program write them as one long string of numbers or variables separated by commas. As it is all in one VDU command the action is very fast, and may have to be slowed down, by line 130, for example. It is equally simple to move blocks in any direction on the screen.

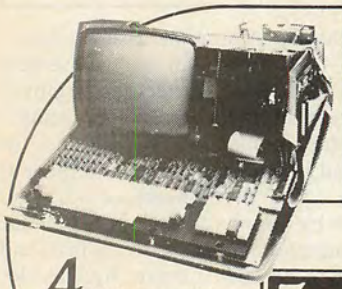
Figure 1. Character generator lines.

Line 910 — Sets numeric Print width with @%. Defines graphics screen area with VDU24, and text area with VDU28.
Line 920 — VDU4 separates text and graphics cursors. VDU30 homes the cursor to the top left of the screen.
Line 960 — Discovers what the previously defined character is by Peeking the screen with the ? command, ofsetting &0C00, the beginning of the defined character area.
Line 990 — Illustrates the use of the Point command within the editable square to set up the ChByte array. This technique avoids the need to have a separate eight-by-eight array to hold the information.
Line 1020 — Uses the ~ Print syntax for printing numbers in hexadecimal; not documented. Inserts an extra 0 to align display if number is less than &10.
Line 1030 — Uses VDU23 to set the character from the ChByte array.
Line 1060 — Prints out the complete set of defined characters.
Line 1120 — Uses *FX 4,1 to disable cursor arrow keys.
Line 1160 — Picks up numeric value of keyboard arrow key and branches accordingly.
Line 1210 — *FX 15,0 flushes out the type-ahead keyboard buffer.
Line 1250 — Uses the Copy key.
Line 1260 — Uses the Delete key.
Line 1280 — After detecting an F in editing mode, fills the square with red, then back to the default of black.
Line 1340 — Tests the point of the editable square with the Point command; returns the current colour.
Line 1360 — Draws the small square cursor.
Line 1380 — Fills the editing point with a red or black square.

```
 1110*FX 15,0
 1120 *FX 4,1
 1130 H=1:V=1:PROCSPOT(1,H,V)
 1140A$=GET$:C%=ASC(A$)
 1150 IF C%<136 OR C%>139 GOTO1240
 1160 ON C%-135 GOTO 1170,1180,1190,1200
 1170IF H=1 GOTO 1210 ELSE PROCSPOT(0,H,
V):H=H-1:GOTO1230
 1180IF H=8 GOTO 1210 ELSE PROCSPOT(0,H,
V):H=H+1:GOTO1230
 1190IF V=1 GOTO 1210 ELSE PROCSPOT(0,H,
V):V=V-1:GOTO1230
 1200IF V=8 GOTO 1210 ELSE PROCSPOT(0,H,
V):V=V+1:GOTO1230
 1210 *FX 15,0
 1220 VDU7:GOTO1140
 1230 PROCSPOT(1,H,V):GOTO1140
 1240 IF C%=13 GOTO 1310
 1250 IF C%=135 THEN PROCBLOB(1,H,V):GOT
O1140
 1260 IF C%=127 THEN PROCBLOB(0,H,V):PRO
CSPOT(1,H,V):GOTO 1140
 1270 IF A$="C" THEN PROCPANEL:GOTO 1130
 1280 IF A$="F" THEN GCOL0,129:PROCPANEL
:GCOL0,128:GOTO 1140
 1290 IF A$="N" THEN PRINT TAB(0,5);CLEA
RLINE$;TAB(0,5):INPUT "New number >"NTES
T: IF NTEST<224 OR NTEST >255 THEN PROCE
RR:GOTO1140 ELSE NCHAR=NTEST:ENDPROC
 1300 GOTO 1140
 1310 *FX 4,0
 1320 ENDPROC
 1330 DEF PROCSPOT(C,H,V)
 1340 H%=(H-1)*64:V%=(V-1)*64:P%=POINT(2
24+H%,160+V%):IFP%=1 AND C=0 THEN C=1:GO
TO1360
 1350 IF P%=1 AND C=1 THEN C=0
 1360 GCOL 0,C:MOVE 208+H%,144+V%:DRAW24
0+H%,144+V%:DRAW240+H%,176+V%:DRAW208+H%
,176+V%:DRAW208+H%,144+V%:ENDPROC
 1370 DEF PROCBLOB(C%,H,V):H%=(H-1)*64:V
%=(V-1)*64:GCOL 0,C%
 1380 MOVE 200+H%,132+V%:DRAW254+H%,132+
V%:DRAW254+H%,188+V%:PLOT85,200+H%,132+V
%:DRAW200+H%,188+V%:DRAW254+H%,188+V%:PL
OT85,200+H%,132+V%: ENDPROC
```

Steps & Adders

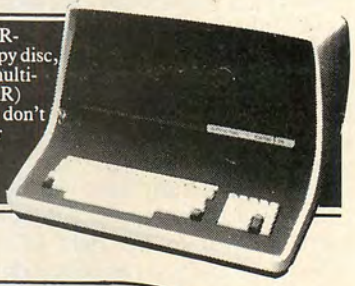
Start here with SUPERBRAIN



3 You need to store greater quantities of data with faster access times so Winchester Disc Storage facility now required. If you started with a W6, move forward 4 places. Otherwise . . .

2 Each SUPERBRAIN comes with CP/M operating system, BASIC programming language, twin Z-80 microprocessors and an RS-232 communications port.

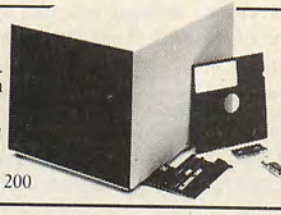
1 Choose your SUPERBRAIN. Twin floppy disc, hard disc (W6) or multi-user (COMPUSTAR) models available. If you don't need a W6 or multi-user straight away, don't worry – you can always upgrade later on.



4 Either upgrade your SUPERBRAIN by replacing one floppy drive giving a Winchester plus floppy configuration . . .

5 OR . . .

6 Add on a 5¼" Winchester in a separate box. Whichever way you do it, Icarus Winchesters give 5, 10 or 30 MB of disc storage – enough to accommodate up to 200 separate items of information about each of 300 individual customers/sales prospects or up to 60,000 stock control records.



7 Your company moves to another part of the country to take advantage of regional development grant. SUPERBRAIN servicing well supported by Icarus nationwide dealer network.

8 Data interchange facility required so external 8" floppy disc drive added giving ability to transfer data to and from a mainframe computer.

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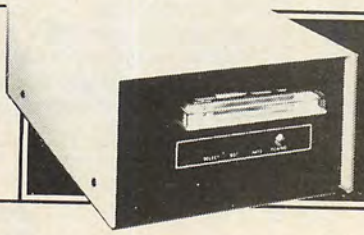
12 A COMPUSTAR system enables you to establish a multi-user network of SUPERBRAINS, with each SUPERBRAIN connected into a central data store giving 10, 96, or 144 MB of storage.



13 Leave nothing to chance. Add a 13 MB CARTRIDGE TAPE BACK-UP UNIT to give file-by-file back up for your SUPERBRAIN hard disc.

14 SUPERBRAIN: the game with no end. Our development continues as your business prospers . . .

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● **Circle No. 159**

Basic truth

The true/false logic implicit in Basic provides a powerful alternative to If-Then. Philip Musk puts it to use in an Apple arcade game — in one line of Basic.

ALL COMPUTERS are capable of assessing whether a statement is true or not, as such a facility is essential for any decisions to be made. Most Basic programmers would use the If-Then type of statement, but there is a second method for performing functions if a condition is met.

A computer has three logical operators which can be used for comparing numerical and even string values. These operators are < , > and = . If you type

```
PRINT 1 = 1
```

then the computer responds with 1 because the statement is true. Some computers generate −1 to indicate that a statement is true.

If you now type

```
PRINT 1 = 2
```

then the computer returns 0 because this is a false statement. The operators < and > are used in exactly the same manner. Any combination of two of the operators, such as < =, is also possible.

The logical operators can only perform a mathematical function if the condition is met or otherwise, whereas an If-Then type statement can perform any function. This is obviously a drawback, but the logical operators offer one ability which is not possible with the conventional kind of decision statement.

On most computers, when an If condition is met, then all the functions on that line after the Then are performed. If the condition is false, then all the functions following the Then are ignored. With logical operators, the rest of the line is processed whether the condition is true or false. This small difference can vastly increase the power of one line of Basic.

The one-line program Three Blobs for the Apple II+ makes use of logical operators. It could be described as a fast-moving action game with on-screen scoring, a high score and sound effects. You are represented by a V on the top line of the screen. Using paddle 0 as a steering wheel, you dodge clusters of stars which scroll up the screen towards you. For every line the screen scrolls up you are awarded one point. Your total score is displayed in the top-left corner of the screen.

If the V hits a star or goes off the top line

to the left then you are deemed dead and the game ends. You cannot crash into the score displayed on the screen. After a crash, a beep sounds and your score is shown alongside the highest score attained. Pressing any character-producing key restarts the game.

Only four variables are used:

A$ — arbitrary character typed by user to restart game
B — position of the V relative to 1044, the middle of the top screen line
C — your score
D — the high score

When you type Run all variables are set to zero, and the string to null. The first section of the program puts the cursor at the beginning of the first screen line. The next then prints your score there. The program then draws the V in the centre of the top screen line. The variable B is decremented if the paddle is turned to the left, or incremented if the paddle is turned to the right. Your score is then increased by 1. The cursor is then moved to the beginning of the 22nd line down the screen and three asterisks drawn at a random position on that line. The Call causes the execution of the standard routine for scrolling the screen up one line.

These three sections appear to be a long and slow method for printing the stars on the screen and then scrolling them. The stars could be printed on to the bottom line and the screen allowed to scroll naturally. However, when the stars were put on to the far right of that line the screen scrolled up twice, allowing the V to fly through some stars. The same thing happened on the 23rd line, even with the preferred method.

The next part of the program is a conditional jump. It checks to see if the place where the V was before the screen scrolled is now blank. If it is the loop described so far is repeated. If the place checked is not a space, code 160, then a crash is concluded, and the rest of the line is executed.

The next part of the program adds (C-D) to D if C is larger than D. It increases the high score to your own score if your score is higher than the previous high score. A beep is then sounded, code 7, and your score and the high score are printed. The keyboard buffer is then cleared to remove all unwanted key presses. The command GetA waits for a key to be pressed. The horizontal position of the V is then reset to zero, and so is your score. The screen is then cleared by the Home, and the game is restarted.

When the program is typed in, no spaces should be included otherwise the end of the line will be ignored. Take care to type correctly, because if you list the program to edit it the Apple includes spaces and it becomes too long. Once the program is in memory it can be run. For the first game you might crash into the program listing, which is still on the screen, but this will not happen again as the screen is cleared after each game.

The highest score to date on the paddle is about 2,500, but the control can be a little difficult to master. The paddle buttons can be used for left and right instead of the paddles themselves. To alter the program, replace

```
(PDL(0)<55)+(PDL(0)>200)
```

with

```
PEEK (49249)>127+(PEEK(49250)>127)
```

The game is now played with paddle 0 on the left and paddle 1 on the right.

A logical operator is not only useful in one-line programs. An operator takes longer to process than one If-Then statement but less time than two so you may be able to write faster programs if you replace two or more if statements by a logical operator.

Three Blobs.

```
10 VTAB1:PRINT C:POKE 1044+B,150:B=B-(PDL(0)<55)+(PDL(0)>200):C=C+1:
   VTAB22:PRINT TAB(RND(1)*38+1)"***":CALL 64624:ON(PEEK(1044+B)=160)GOTO10:
   D=D+(C-D)*(C>D):PRINT CHR$(7)"SCORE:"C,"HIGH:"D:POKE 49168,0:GET A$:
   B=0:C=0:HOME:GOTO10
```

Games for the BBC B and Sinclair ZX Spectrum

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Available from W. H. Smith, Boots, Menzies, other leading chain stores and computer shops. Trade availability: Webster's Software Directory/Prism Microproducts/Lightning. In case of difficulty, or for a full colour catalogue, write to **Division GS22 (Software) Longman Group Ltd Burnt Mill Harlow Essex CM20 2JE**

LONGMAN SOFTWARE

● Circle No. 184

Out to play

Computer games can have serious content — and anyway, what's wrong with having fun? Jack Schofield introduces this month's special feature.

BECAUSE we are serious people and this is a serious magazine we have a tendency to look down on games. We shouldn't. There are no Brownie Points for having a micro that is bad for games: any micro that is bad for games must be bad for other things too. Too slow, eh? No colour option? No fine scrolling or high-resolution graphics? Too bad.

Today's big-selling attention-grabbing software uses colour and sound, draws graphs, offers fine scrolling on multiple windows, and joystick or mouse operation. WordStar, Lotus 123, Microsoft's Multi-Tool Word, Supercalc-3, Context MBA: the old Teletype terminal approach is doomed.

People have been playing games with computers ever since they were invented. One of the most famous mainframe games is Adventure, or Colossal Caves, which was originally developed by William Crowther and Don Woods. But Adventures only require a simple text display, such as can be provided by a teleprinter or Teletype terminal. The boom in games is based on other, more powerful facilities, such as colour graphics and sound effects.

Spoilt for choice

These attractions are many and various, because computer games today cover a wide field, from the completely mindless to the usefully educational. Modern games include Adventure, fantasy and strategy games, educational games, business games, simulations, space and arcade games, as well as computer versions of traditional sports and pastimes.

The best known strategy games are war games, and are also — more tediously — played with game boards, armies and dice as well as on computers. Chris Crawford's Eastern Front is the classic of this genre, though there are now many examples.

Space games started originally with versions of Star Trek, derived from the cult TV series. The apotheosis is Star Raiders, a three-dimensional real-time all-action implementation.

Space games really took off when they arrived in the pubs, clubs and arcades in the form of Taito's Space Invaders. Others followed: Asteroids, Missile Command, Scramble, Defender, Galaxians, Zaxxon . . . microcomputer versions have exhausted most of the possible variations. Fast action, brilliant colour and explosive sound are the important elements.

Once the arcade machines had become established, other types of games started to appear. The first big hit among them was a maze game, Pacman. Like Space Invaders itself it originated in Japan. The next major development was jumping games such as Donkey Kong, Jungle Hunt, etc. Other games, such as Tron, have been based on films. Again, micro versions have generally followed to exploit ideas from the arcade originals.

Many computer games are simply transpositions of established games. Chess is the most obvious example, but other writers have put backgammon, solitaire, bridge, snooker, darts and even dominoes on to the micro.

Flight simulators

It is but a small jump from these to simulations, which need not actually be games. Driving and flight simulations are common. The fun of playing them need not be amassing points or blasting aliens, but simply the enjoyment of mastering a difficult skill. Compare the instrument panel of a Cessna light aircraft with that of the Microsoft Flight Simulator and you will see how accurately the simulation can be done.

Business games are also a form of simulation. The program parallels the running of a business, which might be — in American examples — a lemonade stand, or the economy of a whole country. Whatever the product, these games generally involve setting production levels, paying the workmen, buying advertising and negotiating loans with the bank. The program may also throw in random disasters like strikes and wet winters, to see how well you cope.

In real life, economists and politicians regularly play this kind of game — except they call it the Treasury model of the economy. Each faction feeds in its policies and trade assumptions, and the model comes back with the results — usually inflation and higher unemployment.

Educational games also run the gamut from the pre-school level — learning the alphabet — to arcade-style action. Drill has a bad name in these progressive times, but nonetheless it is something a computer can handle very efficiently.

American games

Some modern American educational games really do offer arcade-style action. Type Attack is one example. Letters rain down on your position and you have to press the appropriate letters on the keyboard to destroy them. Even if games don't teach anything, they have one very important function: they make microcomputers friendly and accessible.

Right from their earliest days, when most people were afraid of computers, micros have been dismissed as toys. The original Apple was dismissed out of hand by most of the major computer companies, because it had colour and sound and attracted lots of games. Those major companies stood by as Apple became a billion-dollar corporation.

Of course the companies who want to sell to the business user tend to play down the games aspect of computing. One reason is that they are afraid to have their micros compared to machines like the BBC Micro and Commodore 64, which are not only vastly cheaper, but in some respects more powerful.

But this anti-games attitude is mistaken, as is shown by the example of IBM. The IBM PC already sets the standard in the small business/executive work-station category of micros, and is set to become the most successful micro in history. Nevertheless it is not dressed up as a "professional", but is plainly a personal computer. Games and education programs make the IBM PC an all-round applications machine, and that accounts for its wide appeal. The fact that it is a powerful business machine is too obvious to need stating.

The point is that a computer is simply an applications machine, like a telephone, a camera or a TV set. If you tried to sell someone a telephone that only took business calls, or a TV that would only receive information programs, but had an automatic cut-out for *Coronation Street*, people would think you were crackers. They'd be right. Nevertheless people do the same thing pretending games don't exist when, if the truth be told, they permeate all microcomputing.

Work or play?

Children really do enjoy messing about with computers. Lorraine Boyce explains how they could be learning at the same time.

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN work that which I must do, and play, that which I enjoy doing, become ever more blurred. Since many school leavers are unlikely to find a job immediately after leaving school, educational objectives have to change. Fifth-year courses increasingly include an element of education for leisure designed to keep unemployed teenagers off the streets, and to reduce the potential mischief of idle hands.

One recent government initiative extends the provision of Information Technology Education Centres, ITECs. Based on the famous Notting Dale centre, there are now over 100 dotted throughout the country. Unemployed school leavers are given workshop facilities and instruction in micro-technology and electronics. The spin-off is that they become employable in an area where demand for competent personnel at present exceeds supply.

Young people initially attend the ITECs for the best possible reason: they want to. Even in overcrowded, badly equipped inner-city schools fascination with new technology is not stifled. Video arcades and High Street micro dealers sell the idea that it is essential to get closer to the changes prompted by the microchip. Some young people even shoplift home computers in order to teach themselves to program. With motivation such as this who can judge what is work and what is play?

If the premise that work and play are becoming indistinguishable is accepted, then any piece of software can be regarded as a game. Apart from commercial installations, few of us load a program a second time which we do not enjoy using. A whole population must be educated to computer literacy, as rapidly and painlessly as possible.

The door is wide open for professional micro programmers to assist attempts by educationalists and parents to channel the young's enormous enthusiasm for games and technology into valid learning experiences. So much the better if these can be seen to enhance the constituents of the traditional curriculum found in schools. Teachers may complain about the lack of first-rate educational software, but there are still some useful samples around. Several established micro dealers have responded to the interest and are stocking educational games.

Tentative enquiries for educational games in branches of W H Smith produced a positive, informed response. Prominent among the selection of software available were three Spectrum programs released by Longman. They were written for the government's Microelectronics Education Programme, MEP, and were part of the software support for the Department of Trade and Industry's half-price hardware for schools package. Parents have always gone to some lengths to acquire the same textbooks as their children use at school. Spectrum owners may now do the same with primary-school cassettes such as ABC Liftoff and Hot Dog Spotter, which reinforces estimation of number. Other Spectrum games include Widgit's trio: one on the alphabet and two assisting with the concept of sets, the foundation of much infant-school level mathematics. Sets also feature in Get Set, one of the Griffin range also available from W H Smith.

The Griffin programs are written by practising teachers; Get Set by the Sinclair prize winning Fisher-Marriott duo, who learned the hard way to make error messages less attractive than the reward for a correct response. Their spelling game included monstrous purple space invaders to carry away unwanted letters and dump them in a large wastepaper basket. The children loved them. This salutory lesson

has yet to be heeded by the ingenious designer of Scisoft's Jungle Maths, demonstrated before an interested throng in Tottenham Court Road's Spectrum Centre.

The reward for a correct calculation is the movement of a tiny figure through the pixels of a strip of jungle at the top of the screen. Try a wrong answer and the display changes. Palm trees and a larger figure appear; falling coconuts bombard the figure until its limbs fall off. Onlookers agreed that this was far more fun and carried on getting the sums wrong. The Pit yawned in front of us and the figure fell to land with a splat at the bottom. Even the tattooed skinhead whose exploration of Psion's Flight Simulator had been interrupted by the experiment felt that lack of skill was being reinforced.

Flight simulators occupy their own niche. It is probably libellous to repeat the persistent rumour that at least one eastern European airline uses the Psion Spectrum version to train its pilots. But these games do seem to have opened up a new area of realistic simulations. Those wondering how they compare with the real thing should tune to Central Television's *Magic Micro Mission* in November. One edition of this six-part *Tiswas*-inspired series shows a flight simulator used by a real air-traffic controller talking down a real airline captain.

Also anonymous is the Oxford Street software emporium which stocked but refused to load or even describe the Texas Instruments educational games. The range undoubtedly has some most attractive graphics and TI Logo, with its magical sprites, is based on Seymour Papert's research at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Those alarmed that young people are becoming voluntary Basic hacks can take hope in the strong movement of primary teachers towards use of Logo as the only programming language for children. Would that the CSE and O-level examination boards could look at it that way too.

Far too many are prettified versions of drill-and-practice programs designed to teach and test spellings and number bonds. Here it is arguable that the patient and uncritical micro is a better mentor than a hard-pressed teacher or worried parent. However, the capabilities of the computer lend themselves to far more imaginative and worthwhile educational games. Some of the best are appearing in non-

(continued on next page)

Educational software

catalogued by Theodora Wood

ATARI

Game	Type	Memory (K)	Supplier	Age	Price
Conversational French	LP	16	AT	10+	£40
Conversational German	LP	16	AT	10+	£40
Conversational Italian	LP	16	AT	10+	£40
Conversational Spanish	LP	16	AT	10+	£40
Cubbyholes	Q	16	AT	5-12	TBA
European Countries & Capitals	Q	16	AT	10+	£15
Hickory Dickory	LP	16	AT	5-11	£11.50
Invitation to Programming 1-3	PR	8	AT	10+	£20-£23
Mathematic-tac-toe	Q	16	AT	8-16	£11.50
My First Alphabet	LP	32	AT	2+	£30
Number Blast	RD	16	AT	6-16	£11.50
Quizmaster (disc)	Q	32	AT	8+	£16
Scram	SIM	16	AT	12+	£20
Speed Reading	LP	16	SL	15+	TBA
The Music Tutor	MU	40	AT	6+	TBA
Three R Math System	RD	48	AT	5-13	TBA
Tricky Tutorials 1-11	PR	16	MA	12+	£21
U.S. States & Capitals	Q	16	AT	10+	£15
Vdeo Math Flash Cards	RD	8	AT	6-10	£11.50

BBC MICRO

Game	Type	Memory (K)	Supplier	Age	Price
Additional Fun	RD	32	SH	4-7	£14.95
Algebra 2	LP	32	SM	13+	£7.95
Algebraic Manipulation	LP	16/32	AC	15-18	£9.95
Animal Vegetable Mineral	IN	16/32	BE	7-13	£5.69
Biology	LP	32	SI	14-16	£12.50
Business Games	SIM	16/32	AC	12-18	£9.95
Chemical Analysis	LP	32	AC	15-18	£13.80
Chemical Simulations	LP	32	AC	15-18	£13.80
Chemical Structures	LP	32	AC	15-18	£13.80
Educational Games	Q	16/32	GA	5+	£5.95
First Steps in Algebra	LP	32	SM	10+	£7.95
Happy Numbers	RD	32	BE	4-6	£8.95
Introduction to Trigonometry	LP	32	SM	16-18	£7.95
Jars	RD/LO	32	AC	7-13	£11.90
Launching Logic	LO	32	SH	5-8	£14.95
Learning Maths Package	RD	16/32	GA	9-12	£7
Lift Off with Numbers	RD	32	SH	3-6	£14.95
Mental Arithmetic	RD	32	SM	8-14	£6.95
Missing Signs	RD	16/32	AC	5-10	£11.90
Mr T Tells the Time	RD	32	GH	3-7	£12.95
Mr T's Money Box	RD	32	GH	3-7	£12.95
Mr T's Alphabet Games	RD/Q	32	GH	3-6	£12.95
Mr T's Measuring Games	RD/Q	32	GH	3-6	£12.95
Mr T's Number Games	RD/Q	32	GH	3-6	£12.95
Mr T's Shape Games	Q	32	GH	3+	£12.95
Music Tutor	MU	16/32	GA	8+	£10.95
Number Balance	RD	16/32	AC	5+	£9.95
Peeko Computer	LO/PR	16/32	AC	5+	£9.95
Sets & Operators	LO	32	SH	7-12	£14.95
Sentencing Sequencing	RD	32	AC	7-9	£11.90
Theorem of Pythagoras	LP	32	SM	10+	£7.95
Timeman One	RD	32	BE	4-9	£8.95
Tree of Knowledge	IN	32	AC	4+	£9.95
Town Test	Q	32	SI	4+	£6.50
Turtle Graphics	LO/PR	32	AC	9+	£16.85

COMMODORE PET

Game	Type	Memory (K)	Supplier	Age	Price
Animation	PR	16/32	SU	8+	£15
Broadwater Economics	SIM	16	WL	14+	£28.75
English Skills	RD	16/32	PE	9-13	£10
Flight Simulator	SIM	32	SU	9+	£20
Font	PR	16/32	SU	10+	£8
Kings + Queens	Q	32	SU	8+	£6
Languages	Q	16/32	PE	9-16	£10
Mathematical Games 1&2	Q	16/32	PE	8-14	£10ea.
Multiple Choice	Q	16/32	PE	6-9	£10
Northern Hangman	Q	16/32	PE	9-13	£10
Numeracy Skills	RD	16/32	PE	4-8	£10
Physics 1-5	LP	16/32	PE	14+	£10ea.
Southern Hangman	Q	16/32	PE	14+	£10

COMMODORE 64

Game	Type	Memory (K)	Supplier	Age	Price
Gortek, The Microchips & 12 Educational Programs	PR	64	PE	10-13	£12.95
Gortek, the Kryptobytes & 12 Educational Programs	PR	64	PE	10-13	£12.95

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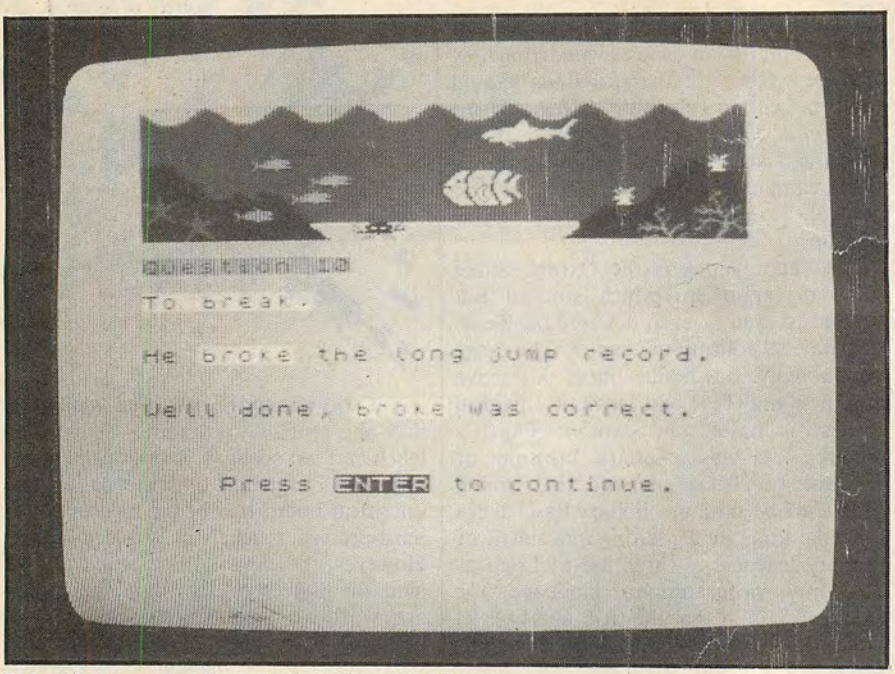

Calpac's programs include the rule-and-drill type.

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commercial areas, but Applied Systems Knowledge, ASK, has some good games available over the counter for the BBC and Vic-20. The series includes a version of Kim's game as well as the identikit Facemaker.

Inner London Education Authority has set up a unit which steadfastly withstands all approaches to commercialise its excellent maths programs. Secondary Maths Individual Learning, Smile has some of the best and soundest educational software available. It includes simple number guessing and attractive maze games. Nim prompts much discussion but is rarely beaten, and involves searching for lost animals, which motivates work on the use of co-ordinates. Unfortunately this highly desirable 380-Z software is normally available only to ILEA teachers.

When Northamptonshire teachers realised how little software would initially be available for their DoTI 480-Z machines, they set to and wrote some straightforward but useful material. The

(table continued from previous page)

VIC-20

Game	Type	Memory (K)	Supplier	Age	Price
Biology O-level	LP	20	PE	14+	£9.99
Physics O-level	LP	20	PE	14+	£9.99

DRAGON 32

Game	Type	Memory (K)	Supplier	Age	Price
Artist	PR	32	AB	5+	£5
First Letters and Words	RD	32	AB	4-6	£6.50
Flight Simulator	SIM	32	PSS	9+	£7.95
Infant Pack	RD	32	SD	3-6	£3.95
Junior Pack	RD	32	SD	6-9	£3.95
Maths Level 1	RD	32	CH	4-6	£19.95
Maths Tutor	RD	32	AB	3-10	£5
Music Tutor	MU	32	AB	5+	£12.95
O-level Physics	LP	32	AB	14+	£6.50
Popstar	SIM	32	SW	9+	£5.25
Puzzler	LO	32	SD	8+	£6.95
Quiz Pack	Q	32	SD	6+	£3.95
Time Traveller	SIM	32	WL	9-13	£9.95

SINCLAIR SPECTRUM

Programs marked with an asterisk* are also available for the ZX-81

Game	Type	Memory (K)	Supplier	Age	Price
ABC Lift-Off	RD	16/48	LO	4-8	£7.95
Adding & Subtracting	RD	16/48	WI	3-6	£5.25
Alphabet	RD	16/48	WI	3-6	£5.25
Animated Arithmetic*	RC	16/48	LC	3-8	£6.50
Ballooning	SIM	48	HE	8-12	£9.95
Calpac FL1*	RD	16/48	CA	5-8	£9.50
Calpac FL2*	RD	16/48	CA	7-10	£9.50
Calpac FL3*	RD	16/48	CA	9-12	£9.50
Calpac O-level Chemistry*	C	16/48	CA	9-12	£9.50
Car Journey	SIM	48	HE	8-12	£9.95
Countabout	RD	16/48	LO	4-8	£7.95
Counting	RD	16/48	WI	3-6	£5.25
Educational Quiz*	Q	16	RO	6+	£4.95
English Literature	Q	16/48	SC	9+	£6.95
Firework Music*	MU	16/48	SO	4+	£5
First Numbers	RD	16/48	CO	3-6	£5.95
Flight Simulation	SIM	48	SC	9+	£7.95
French Vocabulary Test	RD	16/48	SC	9+	£4.95
Geography 1	Q	16/48	SC	9+	£6.95
German Vocabulary Test	RD	48	TU	11+	£4.95
Hidden Letters	Q	16/48	PO	5+	£5.95
History 1	Q	16/48	SC	7+	£6.95
Hot Dog Spotter	RD	16/48	LO	4-8	£7.95
Intermediate Maths 1&2*	RD	16/48	RO	9-13	£4.95
Inventions 1	Q	16/48	SC	7+	£6.95
Language Development*	RD	16/48	DR	7-13	£7.90
Maths 1-5*	LP	16/48	SN	11+	£7.95
Micro-Maths*	LP	16/48	LC	14+	£24.50
Money	RD	16/48	PO	3-10	£5.95
Music Maker	MU	48	BL	5+	£5.75
O-level French Revision*	LP	16/48	RO	14+	£4.95
O-level German Revision*	LP	16/48	RO	14+	£4.95
Shapesorter	RD	16/48	WI	3-8	£5.25
Short Vowel Sounds	RD	48	SR	3-8	£7
Snail Logo	LO/PR	48	CP	9+	£9.95
Special Agent	SIM	48	HE	8-12	£8.95
Tables	RD	16/48	CO	7-11	£5.95
Telling the Time	RD	16/48	PO	3-9	£5.95
Telling the Time	RD	16/48	CO	3-9	£5.95
The Night Sky*	A	16	BR	6+	£8.90
The Four Rules of Number*	RD	16/48	DR	6-13	£11.70
Tuner*	MU	16/48	SO	5+	£5

Program type

IN: **Information retrieval categorisation**
Only a limited number of these programs exist for children. They familiarise the user with filing techniques to set up data banks and information-retrieval systems of their own choice.

LO: **Logic learning**
Maze programs found in games listings are the oldest form. Adventure programs explore this area in an imaginative way but few have been produced specifically for children. Programs specifically for children are available to encourage logical thought, and introduce younger children to the concepts of sorting according to shape/colour/size. More advanced versions exist to explore this area further.

LP: **Learning package**
Learning packages are valuable aids for the secondary-school child onwards, and can teach a variety of subjects. Like Rule and Drill, they teach by example and test, and could be particularly useful in revision for examinations.

MU: **Music**
Programs of this sort use the computer's sound and graphics

inevitable Hangman is there but so are helpful programs on sets and Venn diagrams, a computerised Battleships, three-dimensional Noughts and Crosses and an infant word processor. Full marks for initiative to the Northamptonshire pioneers.

Board games, the family entertainment of our Victorian predecessors, readily lend themselves to today's technology. No longer do we need to search down sofas for missing pieces, and any tendency to cheat is automatically checked. The chess simulations on the market are a boon to the lone enthusiast and are now joined by Griffin's Reversi — also called Othello — TI's Yahtzee, and Psion's Scrabble. Unlike the majority of games played against the micro, Psion's scrabble gives the player a slight advantage. If a word which the computer does not recognise is entered it will be challenged. However, the player can then affirm that the word exists and the micro will accept it, although it is unable to add it to its vocabulary for next time. Cheating is possible but the ethics of someone prepared to cheat a computer at Scrabble are beyond comment. Less easy to fix is the Mensa intelligence test available for the Spectrum.

Right from the beginning computing has been regarded by most of its exponents as play. Mainframe boffins cheerfully and absorbedly spend most of their waking hours at the keyboard. Lights burn all night in university computer centres — not all the students inside are using or writing Adventure games either. Unwilling school children are ejected from after-hours computer clubs by teachers who forget to eat lunch because they are as hooked as their pupils. Tots on TV giggle as they press keys to animate floor turtles. Even Hunt the Thimble has been computerised by Ginn.

People enjoy computers. It is hard to draw a line where the games stop and the education begins. Recent revised opinion even holds that much-criticised video games have an educational spin-off in terms of enhanced concentration and the strengthening of weak or damaged limbs.

Software for schools is now a thriving cottage industry, a response to teachers' insistent demand for good educational software. The position improves all the time and many established publishers are entering the market. Assessment of the educational aspects of software is simple. Just ask yourself "Did I learn anything and was it fun?" If the answer to both is yes, then you could probably say it was an educational game.

capability to introduce recognition of tone, use of a keyboard and musical notation.

PR: **Programming skills**
There are a number of programs available to teach programming to older children and adults. For the age range 9 to 16, these skills are either taught in a simplified game/test format or introduce versions of Logo. This teaches programming skills by allowing the child to use simple commands to move and draw with a turtle on the screen or on the floor. They encourage a familiarity with logic, programming routines and geometric functions. Problem-solving skills learned in this way can be applied in other areas.

Q: **Quiz**
Quiz programs operate in various fields of education and are either quizzes set by the program and/or can be used interactively by the child/adult setting the questions and levels of difficulty. Also included in this category are educational games.

RD: **Rule and drill**
Rule-and-drill programs use the computer's capability of graphics, sound and animation to teach basic skills from pre-school to secondary age. The format is generally to present examples and then test. Following on from more familiar methods of teaching these skills, they can make rote learning more interesting and fun if used for short periods of time. The programs listed for the younger children can introduce them to the computer and its keyboard.

SIM: **Simulation**
Many programs have been produced for older children and adults, but few for the under-10s. Children make decisions based on information presented either graphically or as text. They can introduce a child to the vocabulary and concepts and the consequences of decisions taken.

Programs listed here are available on cassette, and sometimes on disc too.

Suppliers

AB: Abacus Software, 21 Union Street, Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire.

AC: Acornsoft, 4a Market Hill, Cambridge CB2 3NJ.

AT: Atari International (U.K.), Atari House, Railway Terrace, Slough, Berkshire SL2 5BZ

BE: Bourne Educational Software, Dept AU 6, Bedfield Lane, Headbourne Worthy, Winchester, Hampshire. SO23 7SQ.

BL: Bellflower Software, 6 Rosewood Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex.

BR: Bridge Software, Dept SU, 36 Fernwood, Marpit Bridge, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 5BE.

CA: Calpac Computer Software, 108 Hermitage Woods Crescent, St John's, Woking, Surrey GU21 1UF.

CH: Cheshire Cat, Ampalsoft Computer Services Ltd, Knutsford, Cheshire.

CO: Collins Educational, (W.H. Smith & Son), Glasgow G4 0NB.

CP: CP Software, Dept YC 8, 17 Orchard Lane, Prestwood, Buckinghamshire HP16 0NN.

DR: CES, 94 Airedale Avenue, London W4.

GH: Good Housekeeping, Ebury Software, 72 Broadwick Street, London W1V 2BP.

HE: Heinemann Computers in Education, 22 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HH.

LC: LCL, 26 Avondale Avenue, Staines, Middlesex.

LO: Longman Group Ltd, Longman House, Burnt Mill, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

MA: Maplin Electronic Supplies, PO Box 3, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8LR.

PE: Commodore Dealers; or Commodore Information Centre, 675 Ajax Avenue, Slough, Berkshire SL1 4BG.

PO: Poppy Programs, Richmond House, Ingleton, Carnforth, Lancashire LA6 3AN.

PS: PSS, 452 Stony Stanton Road, Coventry CV6 5DG.

RO: Rose Cassettes, 148 Widney Lane, Solihull, West Midlands B91 3LH.

SC: Sinclair Research, Camberley, Surrey GU15 3BR.

SD: Shards Software, 189 Eton Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 2UQ.

SH: Shiva Publishing Ltd, 4 Church Lane, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 5RQ.

SI: Silverlind, 156 Newson Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE15 0TR.

SL: Silica Shop, 1-4 The Mews, Hatherley Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 4DX.

SM: Small School Software, 1-2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire.

SN: Simon Software, Dept YC, Newend, Redditch B96 6NE.

SO: Software Cottage, 19 Westfield Drive, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3QJ.

SR: Sherston Software, 1 Noble Street, Sherston, Malmesbury, Wiltshire SN16 0NC.

SU: Supersoft, Dept C7, 1st Floor, 13-14 Canning Road, Wealdstone, Harrow HA3 7SJ.

SW: Swansoft Software, Dept YC, 8 St Aiden Drive, Killay, Swansea.

TU: Tutorial Software, PO Box 43, Enquiry Office, 22-29 Mill Street, Newport, Gwent NP1 3XZ.

WI: Widget Software, 48 Durham Road, London N2 9DT.

WL: John Wiley & Sons, Baffins Lane, Chichester, Sussex PO19 1UD.

Towards mastery

Neville Maude looks at the best chess programs and pits two BBC tapes against the opposition.

COMPUTER CHESS has progressed remarkably over the past decade, to the extent that a chess computer recently drew a game with world champion Anatoly Karpov — though admittedly it was during one of his simultaneous displays. When David Levy made his famous bet in 1968, that no computer program produced in the following 10 years would be able to beat him, the wager was a good proposition for the human player. Making a similar bet today would be a different matter.

The best programs and the specialised hardware developments go into the dedicated chess machines which are, of course, single-purpose instruments. However, not everyone wishes to invest in one, especially if they have their own micro. It seems much more logical to utilise the power of the computer and have the display on a TV set or monitor.

Producing the display is not the simple task it may appear at first sight. One problem with early computers was designing black and white pieces that were equally visible on both black and white squares. The general availability of colour has helped here, but some programmers are still having difficulties. A good screen display can swallow a great deal of RAM, while remembering the moves for subsequent replay or listing can take a lot of the remainder. Often too little RAM is left for the actual playing of the game.

The problem is that chess is very demanding of both memory and processor. Even if only a few moves are considered on each side, the number of possible variations can be very large indeed. To search through all the possibilities by brute force quickly becomes impossible, so the program must evaluate each position it finds as best it can. This leads to the horizon effect: the ability to see one more move ahead may produce a crushing victory for the machine, but it does not have the power, or the time, to search the next level. It cannot see over the horizon.

Human players play differently from machines, in that they are able to previsualise a position they would like to be in. They can then work backwards, to see how the favourable position can be arrived at. In other words, instead of simply trying to make the best of a given position, they evolve a plan. The vast majority of possible moves do not need to be analysed at all by the player.

Chess computers have evolved rapidly over the last few years, not just because of increased processing power but also thanks to the skill of the software writers. A good account of this progress is given in David Levy's book *Computer Gamesmanship*, published by Century Publishing earlier this year.

The first popular chess programs for micros were Sargon, written by Kathe and Dan Spracklen, and the ROM cartridge programs for the Atari and TI-99/4 computers. In its time the Atari was something of a pace-setter for the industry, though it lacks sophistication by modern standards. Its game is played on a rectangluar board, and the graphics could certainly be improved on today. It also suffers from the common complaint of becoming too slow at the higher levels.

Sargon, developed in 1977, was published in book form, and appeared on cassette for the popular Pet micro — at a fairly high price. Sargon II, for Z-80 based computers, was an improvement and a version which ran on the Jupiter Wavement III achieved remarkable success at the American Chess Masters tournament in Washington. Sargon II appeared on many popular micros including the Apple II and the Atari, and has most recently come out on the Vic-20.

Much of the success of the Sargon II can be ascribed to the algorithm which analyses the values of exchanges at the terminal nodes — the bottom of the tree in a root-and-branch search. Recently a new program, Boss, has been announced, which is claimed to beat Sargon II and probably does. However, even more recently, Sargon III has been announced, though so far it is only implemented for the Apple IIe and IBM PC.

Another new U.S. program is Chess 7.0 from Odesta, for the Apple II and Atari micros. It was written by Larry Atkin, who was one of the co-authors of the Northwestern University program, Chess 4.7, which won almost everything in the 1970s and was, at the end of the decade, World Computer Chess Champion three years in a row. Which of these three is better I really do not know.

Among dedicated computers, Sargon 2.5 has been superseded by Morphy, which has better opening strategy and avoids the Sargon weakness of castling into danger.

Game	Runs on	Supplier
Chess	Atari	Atari
Chess	Atari, IBM PC	Parker Brothers
Chess	BBC	Computer Concepts
Chess	BBC	Program Power
Chess	BBC, Electron	Acornsoft
Chess	BBC, Vic-20	Bug-Byte
Chess	Spectrum	Mikro-Gen
Chess	ZX-81 16K	Psion/Sinclair
Chess 1.4	ZX-81	Abersoft
Chess 7.0	Apple, Atari, TRS-80	Odesta
Chess II	Spectrum 48K	Artic
Chess, The Turk	Spectrum	Oxford Computer Pubs.
Chess ZX-81	ZX-81	Artic
Cyrus Chess	Dragon	Dragon Data
Cyrus IS	Spectrum	Intelligent Software
Grandmaster Chess	Commodore 64, Vic-20	Audiogenic
Master Chess	Spectrum	Mikro-Gen
Masterchess	Spectrum 48K	Psion
Sargon II	Apple, Atari, Vic-20	Heyden
Sargon III	Apple, IBM PC	Heyden
Superchess	Spectrum 48K	CP Software
Superchess II	Spectrum 48K	CP Software
The Chess Player	Spectrum 48K	Quicksilva
Video Chess	TI-99/4a	Texas Instruments
Voice Chess	Spectrum 48K	Artic
White Knight	BBC	BBC Publications
ZX Chess	ZX-81	Mikro-Gen
ZX Chess I	ZX-81	Artic
ZX Chess II	Spectrum 48K	Artic

Morphy can be expanded at both ends by specialised programs to play more varied openings in greater depth and to improve end-game play.

For up-to-date standings, see the report by David Levy on page 37 of this issue on the most recent European computer chess championship. It is natural to expect that the improvements evident here will eventually work their way through into the standard chess programs for micros.

Whereas previously most of the developments were taking place in the U.S., David Levy's company Intelligent Software is now making significant strides in the U.K. It is noteworthy that the latest ROM cartridge chess program for the Atari computers, to be launched shortly by Parker Brothers, is based on the Cyrus program. A slightly later version, Cyrus II, has just been launched on cassette for the Spectrum and is said bo be very strong.

Main criteria

Yet another new U.K. program is Grandmaster Chess from Audiogenic, available on cassette for both the Vic-20 and Commodore 64. It claims to be one of the world's stongest programs for home computers, but is too new to have established a track record. Ideally, of course, every program would be rated for strength on one of the standard scales. While this is often a selling point of dedicated chess machines, it is rare among computer games.

The main criteria to be considered when choosing a chess program are the strength and speed of the game — which are interrelated aspects — and the facilities available, such as the ability to modify the board. The provision of a Hint facility, to suggest a possible next move, and the quality of the graphics are probably secondary though clearly individuals may have different priorities. To some players the ability to take back a mistaken move — though this is not allowed in tournament chess — may be important.

The ability to play on automatic, as it were, is offered by a number of programs, including Grand Master, Cyrus II and the Parker version of Cyrus. The last two will also replay the game you have just finished. Disc-based programs like Sargon III and Odesta's Chess 7.0 can offer a selection of historical master games: Chess 7.0 has 30 and Sargon III no less than 107.

The overriding consideration must always be that the program must play well enough to provide the human player with a real challenge at a reasonable rate of play. There is no real amusement to be had from repeatedly crushing a weak program.

The latest generation of chess programs to become widely and readily available is for the BBC Micro with 32K, and these can be taken as exemplifying the current state of the art. Bug-Byte and Computer Concepts provide two examples while the latest release is the very strong White Knight II from BBC Software.

The Bug-Byte cassette is, of course, in machine code and loads in only two minutes by the command

*RUN "CHESS".

As with most serious modern programs it moves by standard algebraic commands, understands castling and *en passant,* recognises a stalemate, plays black, white or both, and does not permit illegal moves. This is about the minimum that is acceptable today. Advertisements for the game claim it can be set to 1,000 levels, which sounds impressive, but it is the range of strengths that matters, not the number of minute subdivisions into which that range can be divided. Nevertheless the control over game strength is of interest.

It is set by inputting a number from 0 to 9.99. The number before the decimal point sets the number of moves ahead the computer will search; the number after the point is the number of moves that will be considered at each node. While this gives a good range, play becomes impossibly slow at the higher levels.

For a first trial, I set the maximum strength and opened E2-E4. There are only 20 possible first moves and about six to eight common ones, but after four hours I was still waiting for a reply. Moving down to level 7 gave a time of about five to 10 minutes per move. Then I let it play Mephisto — one of the best dedicated machines available at the moment — at its level 4, which takes about 45 seconds per move. Mephisto polished it off in 30 moves, with the issue never being in doubt.

On the lower levels, the Bug-Byte chess invariably replies to E2-E4 by bringing out its knight, B8-C6, and after the reply D2-D4 brings out the other knight . . . which is, of course, chased away by E4-E5, and white has a very easy game. The weakness of this cassette is that it has no opening book, so the computer can easily be placed in a poor position before the middle-game starts. All chess programs are strongest in the middle-game and are weaker at end-game play. You should step up the level towards the end if you want a more worthy opponent.

Another BBC cassette from Computer Concepts is described as version 2.32B. It is also in machine language but loads with

CHAIN "CHESS"

which in practice boils down to the universal BBC loading CH." ". Loading is again quick, at three minutes.

In this version the player can control the computer strength to an unprecedented degree. You can set the number of moves ahead which the computer explores from one to eight. This is a brute-force search. The next option concerns captures only, and the menu terms it Care; it runs from 0 to 9.

Next comes Sub-level, which determines the number of moves considered at each level, and can be set from 0 to 9. This equates with the setting after the decimal point in the Bug-Byte program. Finally there is a setting called, for no apparent reason, Speed. It is similar to the Sub-level setting, but the number of moves depends on merit, rather than being fixed in advance.

Mercifully, Computer Concepts has refrained from claiming that its program can be set to 8,000 different levels. On level 1 the Sub-level and Speed settings have no effect unless the Care setting is 2 or greater. When Care is greater than 2, a random choice is made between moves of equal merit, which makes for greater variety in games.

Extra features

A typical choice of settings could be 3,2,8,3 at which moves take five to 10 minutes, or longer according to the complexity of the position. Again, however, Mephisto on its 45 second setting beat it without difficulty, despite the great time advantage given the Computer Concepts program.

Other features of this cassette are that it uses the assignable function keys of the BBC Micro to change levels, sides, etc. while Ctrl-H offers a Hint facility. Unfortunately the hints are not very good, as they correspond to the move the computer would make on level 1 with a Care setting of 0.

Chess programs for micros still have plenty of room for improvement, especially in the provision of reasonably good opening books. Another major advance would be programs that continued thinking in their opponent's time, like human players and the best dedicated machines. A better alpha-beta pruning tree would not come amiss, either. I would like to see the provision of time clocks so that the computer can be required to play under tournament conditions, with the possibility of coming under time pressure. Other ideas are the ability to select a particular opening line, and provision of a Hint facility of good quality.

However, the main requirement is still the ability to play at a level of, say, BCF or UCSF 1,400 at a tournament speed of 40 moves in two hours or, preferably, 30 moves in one hour. If computer chess shows the same improvement over the next decade as it did during the last, this will come. Grandmasters must look to their laurels: by 1990 we may have a computer as world champion.

Taking off

It may not be the real thing — but it's safer and cheaper. Ian Beattie-Edwards outlines the complexities of flight simulation.

JUST ABOUT every computer magazine and Sunday supplement carries advertisements for the Psion flight simulator for the Spectrum, as well as the Hewson Consultants Night Flight, both of which are always in the list of top-selling "games". But do not be misled. They are not just games, which I suspect is why they have sold so well, as they are simulating rather well the flight characteristics of a light aeroplane.

There are a multitude of similar programs designed to run on most home computers — with the notable exceptions, at the time of writing, of the Vic-20 and Commodore 64. But since the prospective simulator buyer will almost certainly already have bought a computer, so in practice most people have little real choice.

The exceptions are Apple owners. At present there are five simulations or flight trainers for the Apple. This relative plenty is a result of the machine's good graphics and its market penetration in the U.S., where the flying fraternity is well supported by software writers. It is confirmed by the glut of flight-planning and similar programs — some good, some bad.

The prospective buyer of any home-computer simulation must remember that he or she is trying to compare the micro with, at worst, two or three minis driving a multi-million pound simulator like the Redifon. And that is sufficiently sophisticated to be taken as the real thing by even the most experienced pilot. Many flying clubs have the next best thing, an Instrument trainer, and will be pleased to show you the simulator and a real aeroplane. You may even get a trial lesson: you never know, you might prefer the real thing.

There are several variations on the theme of simulation so do not be confused by the slight variation in phraseology. There is a world of difference between an instrument trainer, a visual flight trainer or a cockpit procedural trainer. To a learner pilot a visual flight trainer would be the most help, but unfortunately it also the most expensive and difficult to design and build.

The trainee pilot relies on all the visual clues, such as wing tips in relation to the horizon, the attitude of the aircraft by referencing a mark on the windscreen, or a distance from the cowling to the actual horizon. The pilot can also gain clues to the aircraft's speed from the rate that the view changes. There is also "seat of the pants" information like the wind rushing past the aircraft, and even the angle that the aircraft crabs in to wind. All these must be available visually, and valid for all phases of flight.

The instrument trainee is a much more experienced pilot who must now fly the aircraft only with reference to the instruments provided in the cockpit. A modern cockpit has several instruments, but only a limited number are essential to safe flight. The remainder are provided to make life easier, and in some cases almost make the pilot redundant.

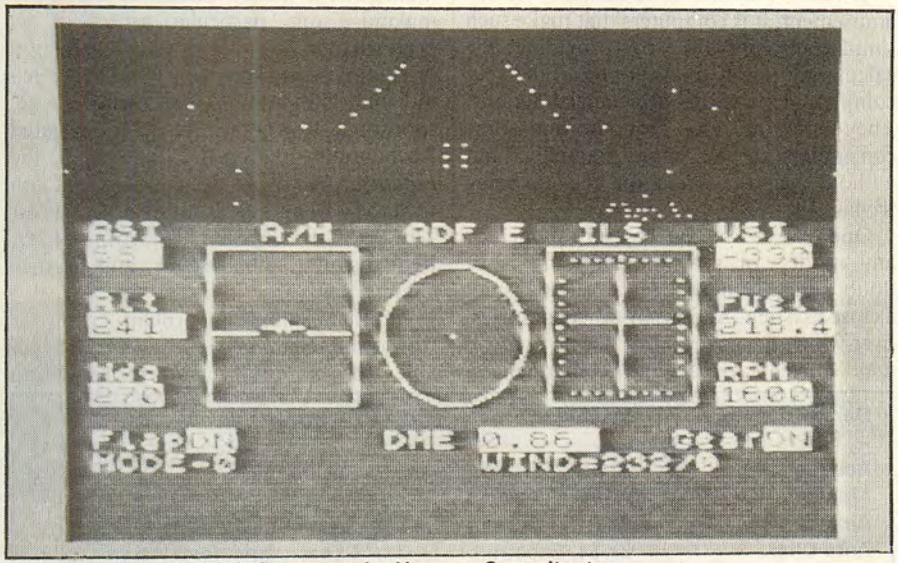
For example, there is a basic layout called the T, which was developed by the military in the early days of flying to help pilots make a regular scan of the primary flight instruments. These essential instruments are the giro compass, artificial horizon, turn and slip, climb and descent, air-speed indicator and possibly an engine rpm counter. The pilot must then scan the remainder of the instruments, including the navigation instruments, at a less frequent rate to ensure a safe flight.

The final type is the cockpit procedural trainer, designed to assist experienced pilots to convert more quickly and cheaply to a new type of aircraft. The idea is that the pilot learns the position of switches, selectors and indicators and the inter-relation between them. There is no attempt to mimic the aircraft's performance. The pilot then goes on to the simulator which might just be an instrument simulator or, more likely, a fully visual simulator. Most modern instrument and visual simulators have sound, vision and motion to provide realism. Only smell is missing.

Ian Beattie-Edwards is a director of Beattie-Edwards Aviation Ltd of Crawley, Sussex, supplier of flight simulators.

A real-life cockpit — the Airbus Industrie A310.

Rediffusion's Boeing 737 flight simulator.



Nightflite for the Sinclair Spectrum, by Hewson Consultants.

Simulator	Supplier	Runs on	Type
737 Flight simulator	Salamander	BBC B	V/I
747 Landing simulator	Atari APX	Atari	limited V/I
747, Airbus, Concorde	Molimerx	Tandy; 747 for the BBC B	
Air-Sim-1*	Mind Systems	Apple II	VI
Cleared for landing*	Programmers Software/BEA	Apple II	V/I
Dawn Patrol		Apple II	combat simulation
Dragonfly	Hewson	Dragon 32	
Flight Simulation*	Psion	Spectrum 48K	V/I
Flight Simulator	Microsoft	IBM PC	V/I
Fly One	Kuma	Sharp MZ-80A	
Heathrow ATC*	Hewson	Spectrum	air-traffic control
Jumbo		Tandy, Genie, BBC B	
Jumbo Jet Pilot	Thorn EMI	Atari	V/I
Nightflite	Hewson	Spectrum	V/I
Pilot		Sinclair ZX-81 16K	limited V/I
Space Shuttle	Microdeal	Dragon 32	Space Shuttle V/I
Spitfire Ace	Microprose/BEA	Atari 32K	combat simulation
Spitfire Simulator	Mind Systems/ BEA	Apple II	combat simulation
TR80-FS1, A2-FS1	Sub-Logic	Tandy, Apple II	

*recommended.
BEA: Beattie-Edwards Aviation Ltd
V/I: visual/instrument

Clearly a home computer cannot compete with the quality of simulation provided by the industry. But there is a new piece of kit, called Minisim, currently available in America and soon to be distributed in the U.K. Minisim is a dedicated comuter with rudder pedals and a control wheel, throttle, etc. which plugs into your TV or monitor. It correctly simulates the instrument flying required by the Federal Aviation Authority in America, and does so well enough to allow a reduction in mandatory training. The National Physical Laboratory is also investigating an economic visual instrument simulator that, when produced, should satisfy the medium-level training market — if the price is right.

But back to reality. For most people, the only way they will ever fly a large or even a small aircraft is to fly a simulator. While none of the products on the market compares with the specification offered by the big machines or the real thing, most micros have several programs available. Those in the table marked with an asterisk are particularly recommended, but I have not tried all the packages listed.

There are no cockpit procedural trainers on the home-computer market, as it is probably felt that it is not interesting enough to the general public. However, there are firms that specialise in producing computer simulations for training in supertankers, oil rigs and similar problematical areas, so there is hope for a similar trainer for pilots.

When assessing a visual simulator make sure the view from the cockpit moves in relation to the control movements; it must bank and climb. And whatever the simulator is designed to do, if it is simulating an aeroplane then you must have joystick control; keys for left, right, up and down movement are not acceptable for a realistic simulation.

The refresh rate for the screen and the joystick read must be fast enough to ensure jump-free displays. Finally, the mathematical model used to simulate the aircraft must work in all axes, and the aircraft must be able to loop and stall correctly. As far as an instrument trainer is concerned, its main function is to ensure the scan rate is sufficient to ensure that the actions carried out by the pilot are the correct responses to the problem in hand.

Play for profit

Learn how to run a company without going broke or landing up in jail.

BUSINESS GAMES are now one of the most interesting areas of computing, with numerous amusing games for home micros and, at the other extreme, serious mainframe games that attract top-flight institutional entries.

Business games did not start with computing. Perhaps the first really popular example of a business game was Monopoly, for which there was a craze in the States in the 1930s, during the great economic depression. Monopoly is, in fact, a property-management game, with its panoply of rents, mortgages, and house and hotel building. A substantial game with a number of participants will often have a separate banker to dole out the Monopoly money.

Of course Monopoly remains popular today, and there are a number of versions for microcomputers including Monopoly, Space Monopoly and Do Not Pass Go. A Monopoly program listing for Commodore computers was published in the December 1982 issue of *Practical Computing*.

There are distinct advantages to using a micro as the banker. It can take over the tedious chore of apportioning rents and, usually, will provide an electronic banking service. In this respect, at least, Monopoly gains from computerisation in a way that bears a resemblance to real life.

At the other extreme, consider something like the Treasury model of the U.K. economy. This is an enormously elaborate computer model which is programmed to mimic the real behaviour of the economy as exactly as possible. Insofar as there are "rules" — the laws of economics — these are but dimly understood and thus appear to be frequently broken.

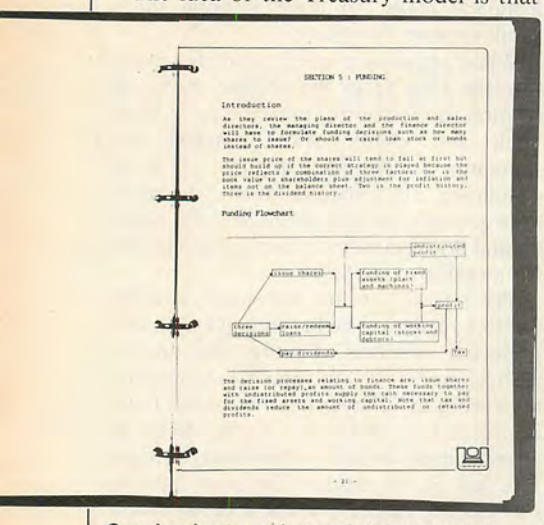
The idea of the Treasury model is that the government should be able to feed something into the system, such as an increase in VAT, and see the effect. If the real economy fails to follow the model then it is the model that is wrong. The complexities of the problem were covered in an article by John Hudson, The U.K. Budget on a Micro, in the July 1983 issue of *Practical Computing*.

Whether they are done seriously or for amusement, it is computers that make such simulations possible, by providing the calculating power to work out all the very complex implications of financial actions. They are far too arduous and time consuming to be done manually, but without them the simulation ends up being trivial.

One reason why the Treasury model, or any model, of a whole economy is of doubtful use is that the real economy is not a closed system. Actions by other countries, over which the government has no control, may have far-reaching consequences. Thus, in a small way, when sterling crashes for political reasons, shopkeepers on the South Coast benefit from a flood of cross-channel shoppers.

The performance of an individual company can be modelled more accurately, though even here a reasonably constant national background must be assumed. This is the basis for a number of management games where the aim is to maximise one particular aspect of its performance — either profits, production or employment. This is the approach taken in the National Management Game, sponsored by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, the *Financial Times* and ICL, in association with the CBI and the Institute of Directors. This year's finalists are teams from M&G, Rediffusion Radio Systems, and Watney Combe Reid.

Another example is Corplan — short for Corporate Planning — which is available for a number of micros from



SECTION 5 : FUNDING

Introduction

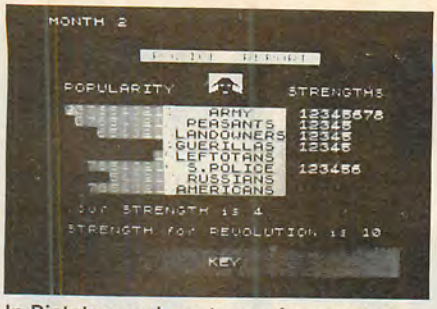
Funding Flowchart

Corplan has a substantial ring-bound manual, as suits a serious learning game.

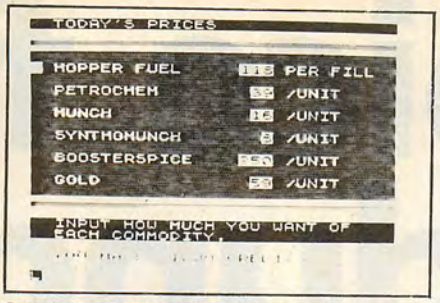
Game	Machine	Publisher
Acquire	Apple II, TRS-80, Pet	Avalon Hill
Airline	Atari, TRS-80, Tandy CoCo	Adventure International
Airline	ZX-81, Spectrum	Cases Computer Software
Auto Chef	ZX-81, Spectrum	Cases Computer Software
Boardroom	Spectrum 48K, ZX-81 16K	Wessexsoft
Cartels & Cuthroats	Apple II	Startech
Champions	BBC, Dragon, Spectrum, ZX-81	Peaksoft
Comanex*	CP/M	Sapphire Systems
Company Director*	TRS-80	Molimerx
Conflict A	ZX-81, Spectrum	Martech Games
Corn Cropper	ZX-81, Spectrum	Cases Computer Software
Corplan*	Apple II, Nascom, Pet BBC, Spectrum, TRS-80	Understanding Ltd
Dallas	ZX-81, Spectrum	Cases Computer Software
Dictator	Spectrum 48K	dk'Tronics
Do Not Pass Go	Spectrum	Work Force
Domination	Atari	Atari APX
Energy Czar	Atari	Atari
Everest Ascent	Spectrum 48K	Richard Shepherd
Flexi-Game*	BBC B	Ulster Mgmt Centre
Football Manager	Spectrum 48K	Addictive Games
Galactic Empire	Atari	Adventure International
Great Britain Ltd	Spectrum 48K	Simon Hessell
Kingdom	Atari	Atari
Millionaire	Apple II, Atari, IBM PC	Blue Chip Software
Miner	Newbrain	Computasolve
Monopoly	ZX-81	MPT
Ocean Trader	ZX-81	Quicksilva
Print Shop	ZX-81, Spectrum	Cases Computer Software
Ship of the Line	Spectrum	Richard Shepherd
Space Monopoly	Dragon	Microdeal
Space Trader	Dragon	Abacus
Taipan	Spectrum	Jaysoft

*serious games

Business simulation



In Dictator you have to pay for a secret police report to see how you are doing.



Quicksilva's Trader on the Spectrum contains little actual trading activity.

Understanding Ltd. Corplan provides an introduction to corporate planning through its simulation of an imaginary company making corples. The company is run by three people: a production director, a sales director and a finance director.

Corplan is a very detailed management game, to the extent of using double-entry book keeping. It was originally developed on a DEC 10 and a mainframe at the University of Birmingham, before being shifted to the Tandy TRS-80 micro because mainframes were simply not transportable. Radio Shack in the United States has done a considerable amount of work extending and Americanising the original package, and it forms the basis of its push into universities and colleges.

Corplan's co-author Martin Mitchell says the game is based on around 100 economic equations and is quite usable up to the level of Masters degree in Business Administration. It is already used as a training aid by a number of major companies including Carreras Rothmans, and is the basis of a national competition run by the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants in conjunction with Tandy (U.K.). The aim of the game is to maximise profits; go wrong and you go bust.

Comanex, from Sapphire Systems, is a similar game, specially written for micros. It is currently available on CP/M-86 for the IBM PC and requires 80K to run, but a version is being produced for the Research Machines 380-Z for the schools market.

Like Corplan, Comanex is designed to give players insight into the running of a typical manufacturing company, and to illustrate how the company's accounts reflect their operations, and how the various accounts fit together. Comanex also has a couple of extra points. First, the skill level can be set by the administrator. Second, random events are built in to simulate some of the risks, uncertainties and surprises of real-life company operations.

Sapphire says its game is used and approved by leading manageent consultants, and that a major professional institution is going to use it as the basis for a national schools-management competition, yet to be announced.

The Ulster Management Centre's business simulation is called Flexi-Game and runs on the BBC Model B. Factors involved include price, quality, sales promotion, advertising, trends and seasonal variations, stock control, investment and cash flow. It is one of the few serious business games to use graphics, which should make it suitable for use in schools.

However, it would be dangerous to be patronising. Most of the national business game competitions seem to be won by teams of schoolboys, while teams from the major banks go bust, and those from the major political parties finish near the bottom of the league.

There are numerous other programs where the accent is on the game rather than the business. The Dictator from dk'Tronics, allows you to run a banana republic on a 48K Spectrum. You have to balance the interests of the various factions such as the army, the peasants, the landowners, the guerillas and the secret police. Your aim is to salt away as much cash as you can in your Swiss bank account, then make a dash for it in your helicoptor before the inevitable revolution leads to your assassination. This game also throws in random events to spoil your plans. You can be invaded by nearby Leftoto or find banana prices drop by 98 percent.

Atari's Kingdom allows you — more seriously — to run a small agricultural community. Items of concern include the number of people starved, number of immigrants, the quantity of land owned, the bushels per acre harvested and the bushels eaten by rats. Your aim is to keep the maximum number of people alive, in which case you are popular and get elected for another term of office.

If you have grander aspirations there is Simon Hessel's Great Britain Ltd, for the 48K Spectrum, which makes you prime minister. This time your aim is to stay in power for as long as possible — just like real life — so you soon learn to expand the health service and build new schools just before an election. However, it must be said that the program, while amusing, is not a serious economic model.

Cases Computer Simulations, run by M R Lloyd-Jones MBCS, MBIM, also has a good range of business games for both the ZX-81 and Spectrum. In Print Shop, for example, you have to juggle the number of staff and machines, paper stock, job-cost estimates and production schedules to try to make a profit. The number of orders is randomised to make life difficult.

If you are looking for a business game to buy, remember that not everything with "Trader" in the title is a real business game. The Trader Trilogy from Quicksilva, for the Spectrum, has some amusing graphics but the amount of buying and selling involved is extremely limited. A good business game must be cyclical, whether the business is run weekly or monthly, or there is no chance to apply the lessons learned. Also the random factors must not have too great an effect on the final result. It may be funny to be wiped out by an unforseen disaster, but business games are not meant to be all that funny.

What they can do, at their best, is introduce people — both children and adults — to business concepts that they might not otherwise meet, and to do it in an entertaining way. This is not to say that everyone has to agree with the way business is done. But it is certainly a good idea to know about it.

Suppliers

Atari International (U.K.) Inc., Atari House, Railway Terrace, Slough, Berkshire SL2 5BZ.

Cases Computer Simulations, 14 Langton Way, London SE3.

dk'Tronics, 23 Sussex Road, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk.

MPT, 42 Raedwald Drive, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.

Peaksoft, 7 Hawthorn Crescent, Burton on Trent, Staffordshire.

Sapphire Systems, 1-3 Park Avenue, Ilford, Essex IG1 4LU.

Simon W Hessel, 15 Lytham Court, Cardwell Crescent, Sunninghill, Berkshire.

The National Management Game, Institute of Chartered Accountants, PO Box 433, Chartered Accountants Hall, Moorgate Place, London WC2.

Ulster Management Centre, Manor House, Rathlin Island, County Antrim.

Understanding Ltd, The Production Village, 100 Cricklewood Lane, London NW2 2DS.

Work Force, 140 Wilsden Avenue, Luton, Bedfordshire.

A voice from the dungeon

Drawing on his experience running Essex University's Mud, Richard Bartle speculates on the possibilities of multi-user games.

ONE of the most intriguing prospects envisaged by games players is a multi-player version of Adventure. You would not only be pitted against fiends provided by the game designer but could also be thwarted by another player, who might well appear out of the blue and mug you for all your treasure!

Although proper multi-player Adventure-type games are probably a fair way off for micros, programmers have already taken advantage of the resources available on the larger, time-sharing mainframes to make the first experiments along these lines. Multi-User Dungeon is the first and, so far as I know, the only large-scale up-and-running multi-player Adventure. It is written fro the DEC System 10 mainframe — which happens to be the same make of machine as the one on which the original Adventure took its first few steps.

Mud originated at Essex University, where its kernel was written in 1979 by a then undergraduate, Roy Trubshaw. Even in its infant form, the game easily overtook Adventure in popularity among the students. When Trubshaw left in 1980 I took over control of the program and expanded it to its present-day form.

Mud runs on the university's DEC System 10, which has a KL-10 processor running under Tops-10 monitor version 7. Communication between players is by shared data using a writable, sharable segment of physical memory. It runs in around 64K 36-bit words, much of which is the shared data, and uses another 40K in random-access disc files for non-changing information such as text. For speed it is written in BCPL.

When he wrote Mud, Trubshaw aimed to produce a multi-player game with a modifiable database. The modifiable database was required to allow changes to be made quickly and easily, without having to recompile the Mud program itself — which is similar to the state of not changing your Basic interpreter in order to modify your Basic program. It was considered undesirable that the program might otherwise have hardwired within itself a line to, say, check if the bear were following you, as is the case in Adventure. What if the database designer wanted a world without a bear, but with some other animal instead, or a world with a bear which was not quite so friendly?

Mud's database is written in a language called Multi-User Dungeon Definition Language, MUDDL. It has undergone many enhancements from which it has emerged with a quirk or two, but is definitely a success. It only takes about two minutes to add a new room, the connections to other rooms, the associated objects and the things you can do to them. It is all done with a normal editor, and the resulting program is compiled by DBase, the database loader, which sets up all the internal representations so that Mud itself can come along, eat, and interpret.

The program structure allows great flexibility and permits Muds to be chained together so that leaving a room from a certain direction might put you imperceptibly into an adjacent room which is actually in another Mud, running with an entirely different world. The only penalties are not being able to talk across such Muds or take things over with you. Such facilities would require shared data, a luxury unavailable between programs. Of course, within the same world, communication is very heavy.

A Mud can be likened to an interpreter trundling over a program, which happens in this case to be a description of an environment. Players run one of the interpreters and play in its world, but that Mud may run another version loaded with different data in order to give the impression that the world it represents is larger than what it can actually hold.

Modifiable databases permit applications for programs in many non-game worlds. The two clasic non-Adventure examples are taxi drivers "on the knowledge" and biology students travelling through the human body: "You are now heading up the superior vena cava. On your right you can see . . ." Other applications are not too difficult to imagine — say, finding your way in advance across the London Underground, or following current along electrical circuits.

Home computers are unlikely to use this facility, at least for the next few years. Storing instructions implicitly as a program, that is procedurally, is more compact than storing the same information explicitly as data and then interpreting it. So until larger memories become commonplace it will always be more economic to hardwire a program. Why program in MUDDL when Basic is halfway to being as good and you probably have a Basic interpreter already? Besides, what software manufacturer is going to release games interpreters which run a language so simple a child can write Adventures if this means they will not sell so many of their own games as a result?

Another reason we will not be seeing home computers with multi-player Adventures in the near future is that their implementation is likely to involve one micro running a series of slaves, rather than a network or ring of independent machines.

Game	Runs on	Publisher	Comments
Adventures 1-12	Apple, Atari, Tandy	Adventure International	Scott Adams series
Castle Wolfenstein	Apple, Atari	Muse	lastest rave
Colossal Adventure	Atari, BBC, Commodore 64, Lynx, Nascom, Oric Spectrum	Level 9	mainframe classic
Temple of Apshai	Apple, Atari, Commodore 64, IBM PC, Vic-20	Epyx	
The Hobbit	Spectrum 48K, Oric, Commodore 64, BBC	Melbourne House	has graphics
The Wizard & the Princess	Apple, Atari, Vic-20	Sierra On-Line/Melbourne	has graphics
Zork I, II, III	Apple, Atari, Commodore 64, IBM PC, Tandy, DEC, CP/M	Infocom	classics

This will make switching to another world — another program — a bad idea, whichever representation for it you choose. If one person wants to leave for another world then everyone else has to go as well. Different sections of a world are awkward on a small machine anyway. It would be a definite damper on any game to have something like "You are now leaving this module: please insert disc Mud 001 and press Return" printed out at you in mid-Adventure.

All those crafty technicalities do not really impress the players. What attracts them is something which sounds exciting, like the multi-player aspect. The first thing most new players do on meeting another player is attempt to kill them. More advanced players will maybe follow you, wait until you are half dead killing the wolf or something, then steal your pickings and run away. It comes of watching too much *Tom and Jerry* on TV, so the sociologists tell us.

Having sated their blood lust, the next thing people do is try to explore. In this respect Mud is much the same as a normal Adventure, although the descriptions tend to be better because of the extra space available to keep them on our industrial-size disc packs. Some aspects do differ, however: for example, you may have to ask for help in order to lift up a heavy portcullis.

At this stage of the game players tend to chat to other players and seek help, directions, advice, or ask if they have seen Fenwyn and has he still got the sword? They may join together in small groups, lest they are set upon by one of the nasties which roam the land, in which case they can gang up on it and do it a bit of no good. The party will also be useful to carry the treasures they find, until they figure out that some of the pack animals, such as the ox, will help them take more weight with them, too. Only one member of the group need carry a light source. Eventually, having amassed some goodies, they will want points for their modest haul.

A problem here is how to give players points for treasure without letting other players pick up the treasure and do the same thing. Normally, in single-player games, points are scored for dropping things somewhere, but in a multi-player game you have the problem that someone else might come along and try to pick it up. It is intensely annoying to be told that the objects lying there in front of you are regrettably unavailable. If you make it disappear when dropped in the place, you need a feasible explanation for its disappearance — and not just "magic". You cannot just have it disappear every time someone picks it up instead, or make them eat it, because often the treasure has other uses: the axe kills people and chops down trees and doors, as well as being treasure.

The solution is to make the treasure disappear when dropped in certain selected places. It is made plain that you will not be able to pick things up from there by their very nature. You can score points for your own treasure; no one else need see it, and you only have yourself to blame if you did not realise it was going to disappear. In Mud you have to cart treasure to a swamp, so it is pretty obvious that if you were to drop it you would not get it back.

Having doused your brand so that you do not blow yourself up setting light to the marsh gases you walk in, say "Drop treasure" or whatever, and score the points. The treasure disappears, then you realise in horror that you wanted to keep the statuette of the lion because it leads you through the graveyard maze. The swamp, incidentally, doubles as an ingenious maze itself, which cannot be mapped by the conventional method of dropping objects, as they just sink. The only non-sinking items are players, so you need co-operation to find the route through to the dry bit in the middle where the crown is hidden.

There are other ways to get points apart from dropping things in the swamp, but they involve destruction of the object in question, as in drinking the potion or killing the dryad. The only exception is kicking the beggar, which earns you a single point every time you are prepared to type out the necessary long command. Killing him, incidentally, would get you about 50 points, assuming you won. Some of the

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tasks are surprisingly complex: for example, finding the rope to fix to the gunpowder to put in the cannon, finding the metal ball to load the cannon and lighting the rope to discharge the cannon at a sturdy door.

Safe places to hide treasure are in short supply too. Only a certain number of objects may be carried, depending on your dexterity and only up to a certain weight, depending on your strength. Although bags and pack animals will to some extent alleviate this problem, they often prevent you going where you want. The ox will not jump off the cliff with you even if you have got the umbrella, and even if it is open. There is no guarantee that leaving an object in one place will mean that it will still be there when you return. It is a case of finders keepers, and your beautiful gold-bound book may be being used to feed the goat by then. The solution is to employ a guard or put it somewhere such as a locked room where no one else can reach it — but then your keys may be stolen from you.

For those who like the idea of posterity, messages and advice for future players can be left behind. The main debating forum is the captain's logbook on a wrecked ship out to sea. Comments ranging from "Pascal rules OK" to "Dragons kill 99 percent of known mortals" have been left for the benefit and edifiction of future generations of Adventurers.

Most exploring is done by logging the game in a file and looking at it later. It is a handy device, but not of much practical use on any micro version, primarily because the game can be printed out on the printer as you play. Also useless unless you are in a timesharing environment is the Bug feature — well it bugs me — which allows players to complain about any aspect of the program which they think is wrong. I have just completed a map of where all the terminals in Essex University are, so that in the future it may append to a message "You have been killed by Nic" the note "who is sitting two rows behind you to your left . . ."

One feature which enhances Muds — though it is a complete waste of time in single-user dungeons — is being able to sleep to recuperate your lost stamina, say after a hard slog at a zombie. You get back a point every 10 seconds or so, but of course if some vindictive type chances upon you while you slumber, you cannot expect to be playing for much longer.

Originally Mud had a Debug mode to check out new sections of the database. It is tedious to have to get the coracle to brave the shark to reach the island in order to find the acorn to give to the squirrels when you eventually get back. Now called Wizard mode, Debug mode has evolved into a sort of on-going end-game which continues to fascinate even master players who have been in 4,000 games or so. It is Wizard mode which makes Mud something more than just a tarted-up single-user game.

Flying around and glowing in the dark while in Debug mode are quite useful features, and after a while other perks were inserted with only a little extra work. Being able to look in rooms without going there, kill people with a single blow, pick up objects from any room without having to fly there first, find the location of objects without having to search for them — all these were a cinch to put in for debugging, and made life comfortable for the program maintainers.

The change came with the Snoop command. It allows someone in Debug mode to see what is on the screen of some other player, without that other player knowing. Suddenly, a command became available to the elite which was not actually any use for debugging. After I first implemented the facility, I spent the next three hours just sitting watching the other players stumbling around asking each other stupid questions and eventually managing to cook up an intelligent solution to all the traps I had laid on for them. It was a revelation.

So was born Wizard mode. It came at a useful time, too: as with most Adventure-type games, once you have all the points it is a case of "So what now?" In the pre-programmed, non-random games such as the original Adventure and the superb Zork there is an end-game which you may enter once you have earned most or all of the points. The end-games soften the blow because they are specially constructed climaxes, and a new section comes as a welcome surprise if you know the rest of the place like the back of your hand. But then, that's it. You have finished. You go out and buy a new disc with a new game, and start off from scratch.

In Mud, the concept of a level was borrowed from the real-world game Dungeons and Dragons, from which Adventure took the original fantasy role-playing idea. D&D still beats computer versions hands-down because people are better dungeon masters than computers — and you cannot threaten a computer when things do not go your way. A player in Mud starts off as a novice, and when anyone meets them in the flesh or types Who, to see who is playing, they are told that, say, Polly is here. After 300 points, Polly goes up a level and becomes Polly the Warrior. Strength, dexterity and stamina go up by 10 too. After 600 points it would be Polly the Heroine and after 1,2000 Polly the Champion. As the points double successively Polly becomes the Super-heroine, followed by Enchantress, Sorceress, Necromancess, Legend and finally, at 76,800 points, Witch. At this stage, strength, etc. are at the maximum of 100, although that does not really matter since wizards can change any of their attributes when they like.

As you reach higher levels of experience you accrue abilities and magical talents. For example, at Enchanter level the deadly magic wand — a sort of medieval laser — can be used to dot off most of the denizens of the land without so much as a by your leave. The ability to cast certain spells appears if you are in possession of the relevant magical item. Such magic lets you see what other players are doing, summon people to where you are so that you can attack them, find out where items are, and so on. In short, they are the least dangerous of the Wizard mode commands. On reaching that final level, the Wizard mode password is revealed, and for you the game has entered a new dimension.

All the time you have been playing you were being pestered by wizards who kept appearing with crashes of thunder, and disappearing in puffs of smoke. If you were stuck they have miraculously known, and you have suddenly found yourself in possession of just the item you needed to get you out but which you dropped in the fiery pit by accident. You have been whisked from the centre of the maze to somewhere you actually recognised, and reluctantly put back if it turned out you were not lost in the first place. You have attacked the pompous, know-it-all, god-like so-and-so's and been ground into the floor first hit; insulted them and found things typed on your screen you did not type. But now you have made it to wizard yourself you can teach them . . .

The first thing you notice is that the prompt has changed from a boring old * to an impressive magic wand - - - *. Next you

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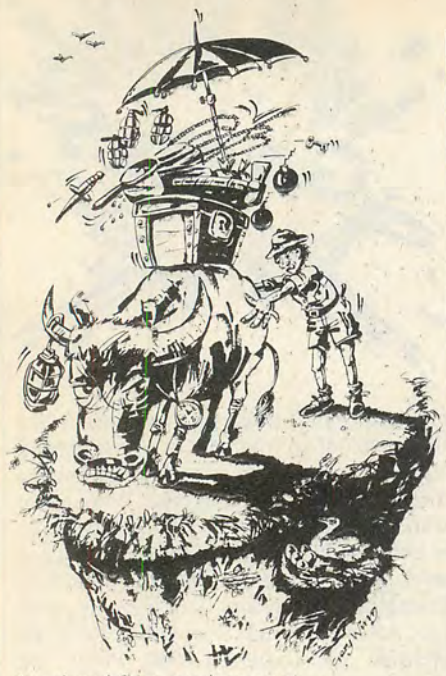

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observe that you are told the names of all the objects you come across, so you can see what is lurking hidden in a room even if mortals cannot. You can switch the rain on and trap someone underground when it floods the river. Hmm, useful.

Then all of a sudden you get a message: "Cynthia has started to play Mud having played 0 times before". Aha! "Get flower from garden. Go start. Give flower to Cynthia. Hiya, Cinth!" From maniacal, paranoid, kill-it-if-it-moves legend you have transformed into kindly, benevolent, tolerant, omnipotent wizard.

You will soon pick up some of the other nifty Wizard mode commands, such as an attach/detach feature which lets you play two or more characters at once and swap between them. One moment you are a wizard, the next a simple novice asking dozy questions to egg players on so that you can give them a bit of what for when they set about you with an axe. Oh, that feeling of veiled power!

Adventure-like games can be improved drastically by better descriptions, graphics of some quality and by the increased experience of the games designers themselves. Having the odd multi-user game on resource-sharing micros will enliven many an evening, but the real fun only comes when the players do not necessarily know each other and are of varying degrees of experience.

The database must be large enough not to bore players by making them get most of their points in several nigh-identical sessions. In Mud, if you get all the treasure you can make wizard in four games. Having several other players in at the same time makes this harder, but you get more points for each individual item and for winning fights.

What I would like to see — and it's a long, long way off — is some local or national network with good graphics, sound effects and a well designed set of worlds of varying degrees of difficulty. In this true meritocracy, you will forever be encountering new situations, new difficulties, new solutions, and above all new people. Everyone starts off on an equal footing in this artificial world.

It is doubtful whether multi-userness is going to be more than just a novelty among the better-off home-computer enthusiasts for a good while yet. Setting up a network over telephone or cable TV lines would have to be big enough business to attract more than just the hobbyist, too. So perhaps we will eventually see a decline in the popularity of the micro Adventure and an increase in a more continuously running campaign. Still, who wants to play in a game full of primary schoolkids going around locking you in small rooms just for laughs? Mind you, they wouldn't if there was a wizard watching . . . we'll have to wait and see. PC

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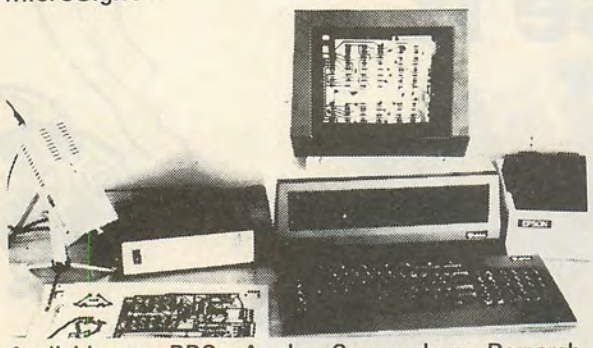

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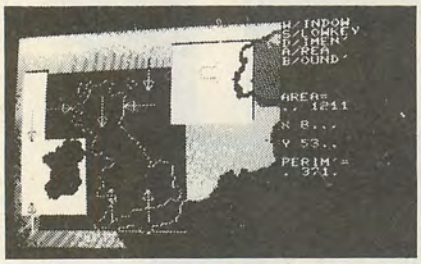

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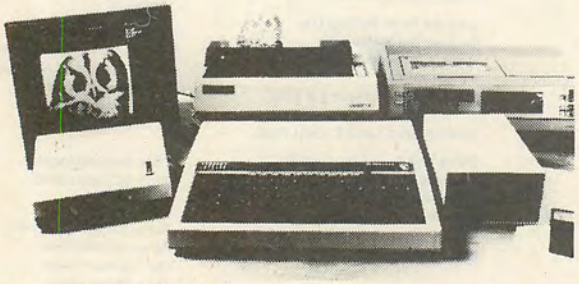

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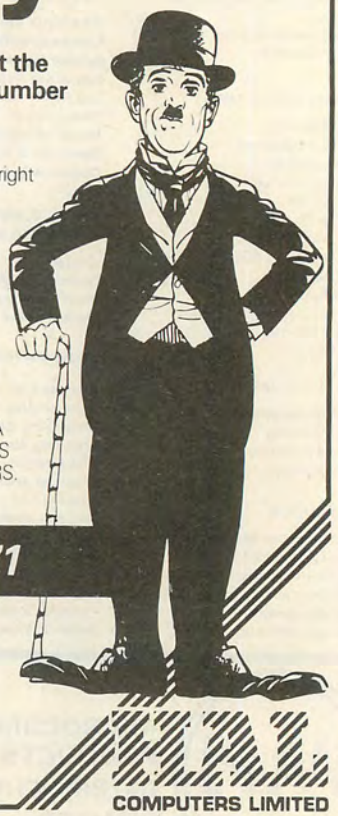

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Games choice

Jack Schofield picks the micro games which stand up best to the test of time.

ONCE UPON A TIME it was possible for someone to have heard of all the microcomputer games available, and to have played most of them. Now few people know more than a tiny proportion. Just keeping track of the publishers would be a full-time job. Computer games programs are now as emphemeral as paperback novels.

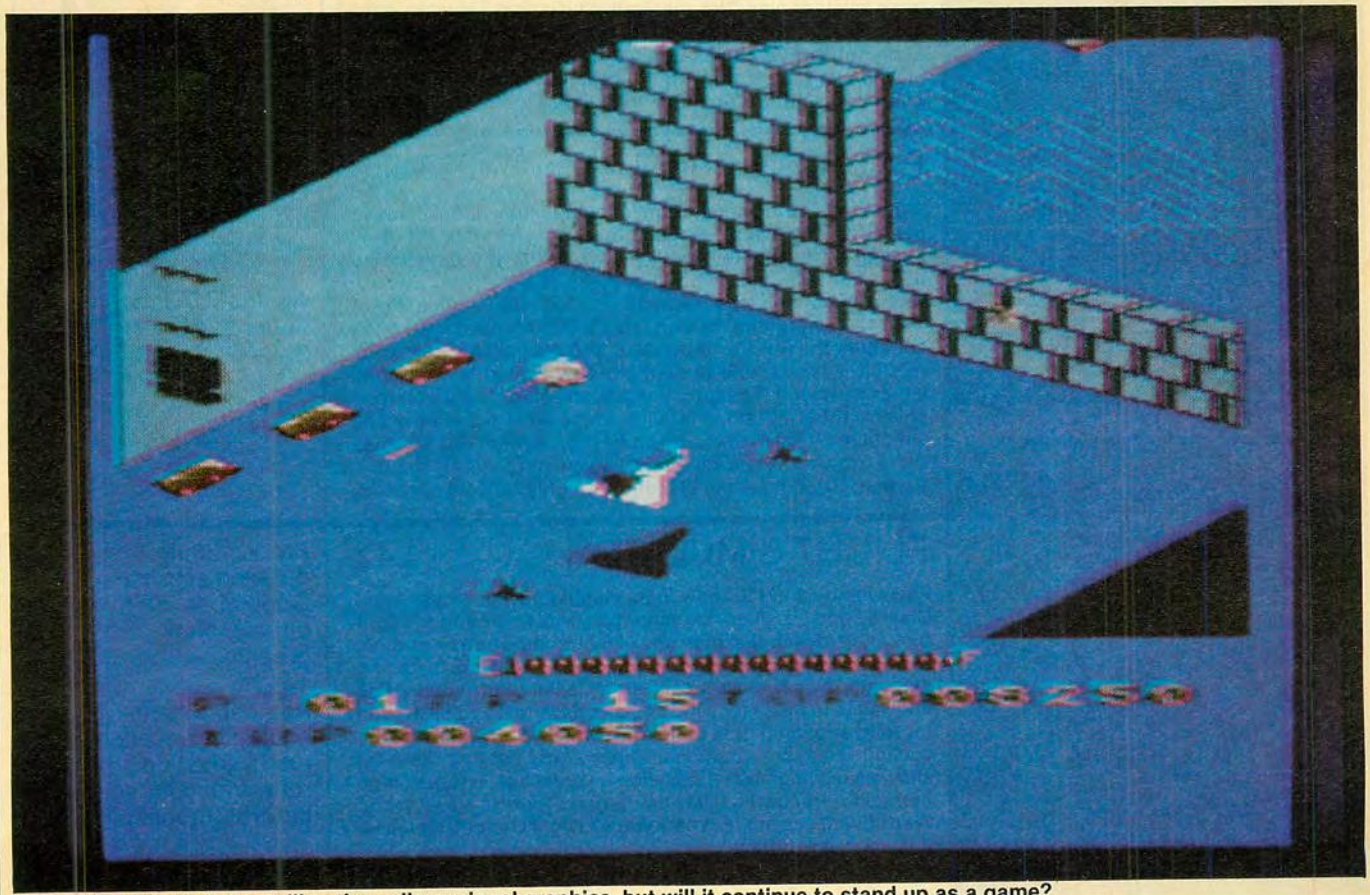
Under the circumstances, choosing a Top 10 is extremely foolhardy, not to say arrogant. What I can plead in mitigation is that, as a reviewer, I have had the chance to try more games on more different machines than most people could stomach. To further balance the selection, I have chosen a wide range of games that I know are all among the best of their type, if not the best.

I have deliberately not picked my latest favourites such as Thorn-EMI's Computer War. Games which are exciting now may in time lose their attraction, especially if the main appeal is the sound and graphics. That happened to me with Preppie.

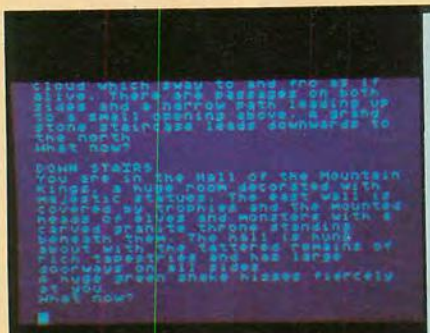
Some of the Top 10 have been around for years, and I'm confident they will stand the test of time. But I have not just picked my own favourites, or Atari's Centipede would be among them, with Zaxxon by Datasoft, to name but two. All the games chosen satisfy other people too.

If there isn't room for all my favourite games, almost by definition there isn't room for yours. Fans of such gems as Ultimate's Jet-Pac, Broderbund's Choplifter, Atari's Pacman or Acornsoft's Snapper, Atari's Donkey Kong or Program Power's Killer Gorilla, dk'Tronics' Dictator or Addictive's Football Manager will look for them in vain. Please do not write in and complain until you've tried all those in my selection. If you get the chance to try them, I think you will like them.

The Top 10 selection is overleaf. Also worth checking out are:
Choplifter, Zaxxon, Zork I/II/II, Miner 2049er and Bandits for the Apple II and Atari.
Computer War, Donkey Kong, Missile Command, Qix for the Atari.
Hover Bovver, Attack of the Mutant Camels for the Commodore 64.
Donkey King for the Dragon 32.
Jet-Pac, Manic Miner, Zzoom, Jumping Jack for the Sinclair Spectrum.
Zaxxon for the Tandy Color Computer.
Parsec, River Rescue for the TI-99/4a.



Zaxxon has wonderful scrolling three-dimensional graphics, but will it continue to stand up as a game?



COLOSSAL ADVENTURE £10

Adventure, written on a mainframe by Crowther and Wood, has been crammed on to a micro, on tape, by Level 9 Computing. A whole new ending has been added, with 70 new locations. It has all been squeezed into 32K by using data-compaction techniques, but the game still takes up to 10 minutes to load from tape. Then your quest takes you exploring the dangerous Colossal Caverns — if you can find them. You must collect all the treasures, get past the giant green snake, defeat the dragon and outwit the bridge troll. And if you do all this without getting killed maybe you will become a Grandmaster. Buy it immediately.
Format: Cassette for Atari, BBC Micro, Commodore 64, Lynx, Nascom, Research Machines, Spectrum.

For. Poetic, moving and tough as hell. Text only but with correct spelling. Save game feature.

Against. Tedious tape loading. Disc version not available.

CYRUS IS CHESS £10-£35

Chess programs nowadays play quite well, but the quest is still on for a machine that plays a more human — a more imaginative — game. Also, it helps to have extra facilities. The Cyrus IS chess program, written by Intelligent Software for the Spectrum, plays extremely well and won the second European Microcomputer championships in 1981. It lets you save and replay games, set different levels and change during play, print out the moves and/or the board, take back moves and set up problem positions. You can also choose the colour of the black pieces.
Format: Cassette for Spectrum from Sinclair and as Cyrus Chess for Dragon; on ROM for Atari; and disc for IBM PC from Parker Brothers.

For. Plays well. Many functions.

Against. Graphics of Spectrum version less attractive.

DEFENDER £30

In Williams' great arcade game you manoeuvre a needle-fighter above a rudimentary landscape, defending humanoids against green landers. Ideally you destroy all the landers first, but listen for humanoid cries. Check radar, zoom round, kill lander, catch humanoid and return him to the ground. You also have to shoot bombers, pods, swarmers and baiters. A lost humanoid becomes a kamikaze-like mutant. Atari's licensed Defender is a brilliant version with three levels of play. The only limitation is that a joystick does not give the starfighter feel of the original controls. Acornsoft's Planetoids is a passable unlicensed version playable, after a fashion, from the keyboard.
Format: ROM for Atari; Planetoids on cassette for BBC.

For. Fast, gripping space game. Good sound effects and highly manoeuvrable fighter.

Against. Too easy after first 60,000 points. Atari ROM only counts 99 attack waves.

EASTERN FRONT £22-£30

War games have a reputation for being fiddly and tedious to play. Chris Crawford changed all that in Eastern Front by making the computer do all the work. Playing it needs no board, no dice and no counters — just a joystick. Eastern Front simulates the German Barbarossa campaign of 1941-42, where the human plays the attackers and the computer the Russian defenders. The computer always wins though it is possible to take Moscow, which is more than Hitler managed. The graphics are amazing. The game map covers about 10 screens with single-pixel scrolling in all directions. It takes three hours to play. Avalon Hill also has Chris Crawford's quicker game, Legionnaire.
Format: ROM, tape and disc for Atari only; 16K for cassette.

For. Easy to play. Good game. Good historical simulation. Amazing graphics.

Against. Takes three hours to play. No Save Game feature.

FLIGHT SIMULATOR £42

Few outside the U.S. knew flight simulators like Airsim-1 and Cleared for Landing, for the Apple, so Microsoft's Flight Simulator, developed from one of them, came as a revelation. It has a full-feature instrument panel, right down to the magneto, which closely follows a Cessna light plane. Full allowance is made for wind and clouds, and if you fly around for long enough it gets dark. Meanwhile, the view out of the cockpit window — optionally front, left, right or down — shows a moving three-dimensional landscape. It is well-nigh perfect for frustrated flyers or learners. There is also a World War 1 flying-ace mode, where you can fight German biplanes. It is very, very difficult.
Format: Disc for the IBM PC with colour-graphics card.

For. Accurate, detailed simulation. Good but slow three-dimensional graphics.

Against. Expensive equipment needed to run it. Check disc runs with your set-up before purchasing.

GRIDRUNNER £5-£8

Imagine Centipede crossed with *Tron* and you get some idea of the flavour of this international hit by Jeff Minter of Llamasoft. Where Centipede is a novelty game Gridrunner is a technoflash effort suitable for the most battle-hardened veteran of the intergalactic space war. Your blaster runs on the lower portion of a grid down which stream the Gridsearch runners while you try to blast them. Meanwhile XY Zappers on the edge of the grid shoot at you from the side and underneath. There are great sound effects on the Atari and Commodore versions. It is possibly the fastest game in the Universe, but if you beat it try the even more vicious Matrix.
Format: Cassette for Atari, Commodore 64 and Vic-20 by Llamasoft; for Dragon and Spectrum by Salamander.

For. Ultra-fast brain-damaging action.

Against. No disc versions. Seen on ROM only in America.

SCRABBLE £16-£25

This is a computer version of the popular word game from J W Spear and Sons — a remarkable piece of programming which packs a vocabularly of around 10,000 words as well as the program routines into a 48K Spectrum. In the original Apple version the dictionary is held on the reverse of the program disc. The graphics of the two programs are quite different, and the Spectrum version has a particularly nice tile-shuffling routine. The computer will play from one to four parts, and at one to four skill levels. Average response time is under two minutes. At the highest level it plays a very good game, scoring on average from 350 to 450 points.
Format: Cassette for 48K Spectrum; disc for 48K Apple; Commodore 64 and BBC Model B versions to come.

For. Plays a good game to official rules. Quite fast. Good graphics. Save Game Feature.

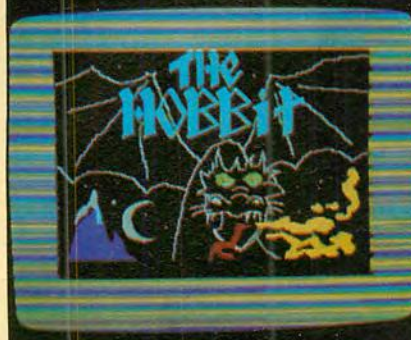
Against: Challenges some well known words and plays its own obscure ones.

STAR RAIDERS £30

The cult TV series Star Trek fathered a series of slow, complex computer games. Star Raiders is a high-speed arcade version of the same idea, and probably the best computer game of all time. You have to destroy all the Klingons, preferably without losing any of your own Starbases. Then you get a rating. If you do it quickly enough, without taking any hits or stopping for repairs, you get a high rating. The game has four main screens: fore and aft views from the Enterprise windows, galactic chart, and long-range scan. Switching is instant. The best feature is the three-dimensional view of the action. If you have only played Star Raiders at Novice level, you haven't played it.
Format: Atari ROM only. No rivals in the game galaxy.

For. Brilliantly fast, complex, challenging space game.

Against. Atari only. Needs three hands or Le Stick joystick.



THE HOBBIT £15

Melbourne House's famous graphics adventure is based on Tolkien's book of the same name, which is supplied with the game. It's called a graphics adventure because it includes about 30 still pictures of locations which are drawn when you get to them. This leaves room for only 80 locations in all, compared with Colossal Adventure's 270. Still, The Hobbit has other qualities, including a 500-word vocabulary and the ability to understand quite complex sentences. The game has a real-time element: you can't sit around thinking because time passes. The adventure follows the book quite closely with you as Bilbo.
Format: Cassette for Oric, Spectrum, Commodore 64 and BBC Micro.

For. Attractive graphics. Large vocabulary. Time element. Many features, including text printout and Save Game.

Against. Slow to load. Some bad grammar and spelling.

WAY OUT £26

Maze games were an early feature of computer gaming, but there has never been a maze game like this one by Paul Edelstein. It constructs three-dimensional mazes on the screen, and you can go careering through them at high speed using a joystick. There is a flash each time you bounce off a wall. Meanwhile the maze through which you pass is drawn at the bottom of the screen — as long as you have your compass. This can be stolen by the whirling cleptangle, so you have to chase that to get it back. Way Out offers 26 extremely realistic mazes, all with the same graphics, and keeps a record of the best score for the shortest way out of each maze. A two-player Mark II version is on the way.
Format: Disc for Apple and Atari from Sirius Software.

For. Real-perspective high-speed moving graphics. Good sound effects.

Against. Maze restricted in size on screen. Maze plan rather hard to see.

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• Circle No. 167

Cosmic circle

by John Hooper

The image on the screen flickered, the colours chasing up through the visible spectrum and back again, and then steadied.

"You see?" the Operator exclaimed, "I told you we're getting close to System failure." The silence was punctured by the faint crump of exploding shells, and the display showed fountains of debris rising from the battlefield as salvo after salvo landed across the Roman trenches.

"We've never had this problem before. How often has it happened?" queried the Observer.

"Well" the Operator began, "it hasn't been too bad on an absolute scale — say, three or four times in the last 10 watches — but the check I ran shows the effect is increasing both in rate and intensity. I'd say we've less than half a watch before a malfunction serious enough to beat all the error traps and cause a full scale crash."

The Observer pulled a long face. "Half a million years of system time, but only eight hours for real! I don't see how we can possible get the replacement up and running in time and link the two for transfer. Are you getting the same problem with other slots?"

Swinging round to the main panel the Operator signed in a new co-ordinate set. "See for yourself!" he replied, waving towards the display. "I've left the tracer on so we can get instantaneous confirmation of any disparities. It slows things up a bit, but at this level the locals will never notice."

The viewer showed an empty plain, straggly bushes and wiry grass. The sound of wind and rain swirled out over the watchers. The Observer read off the tracer P/T-M output. "Salisbury Plain, England; 910573.7; matching to better than 10^{-10} percent! Seems OK. Jump it forward, say 100 System years."

The scene flashed bright, then faded to much the same place and time as before. The tracer readout, glowing gently green above the display, opined that reality and predicted reality again matched to better than 12 decimal places.

"And again. And again". Still no change. "Now give it, oh, a thousand years". Before the flash had died away the tracer chimed softly, and its message flared into orange.

Matching no better than 10^{-2} percent.
Error growing.

"But I don't see anything wrong," complained the Observer.

"It's there, just on the edge of the image." As the Operator swung the display across an aiming graticule materialised in the field and locked on to the target "Close up, and run check 5", ordered the Operator.

The scene hurtled out of view around the edges, and the cross-hairs centred firmly on a circular arrangement of standing stones. The Tracer bonged softly, and noted in red that the match was now no better than 10^{-1}. Its rather synthetic voice said sweetly that the predicted reality was most definitely not capable of producing this artefact, adding that the stones were foreign to the site and the local technology insufficient to erect them, let alone get them there in the first place. It suggested a probably UMOS error, and fell silent.

"Oh, wonderful!" sneered the Observer. "Now tell us something we don't know." He signed for Control, and reported the matter, ending "And next time we re-equip they'll put in MP/C over my dead body! I am fed up to here with their rotten Universal Memory Operating System. Universal Cock-up System would be more like it!"

The indignant squawk in reply was missed by the Operator, who had switched to a command channel and was carrying out a full deep scan of the relevant memory store. The reality image had been replaced by an enlarged view of the store's main index.

"Look," the Operator exclaimed "this seems to be the problem!" He heightened a trail of disturbances running through the Index. "It's corrupted the pointers to this whole P/T sector. No wonder the matching was off; the data is effectively jumbled up like someone had given it a random shuffle! We're lucky we didn't get Stone Age mixed with Atomic Age!"

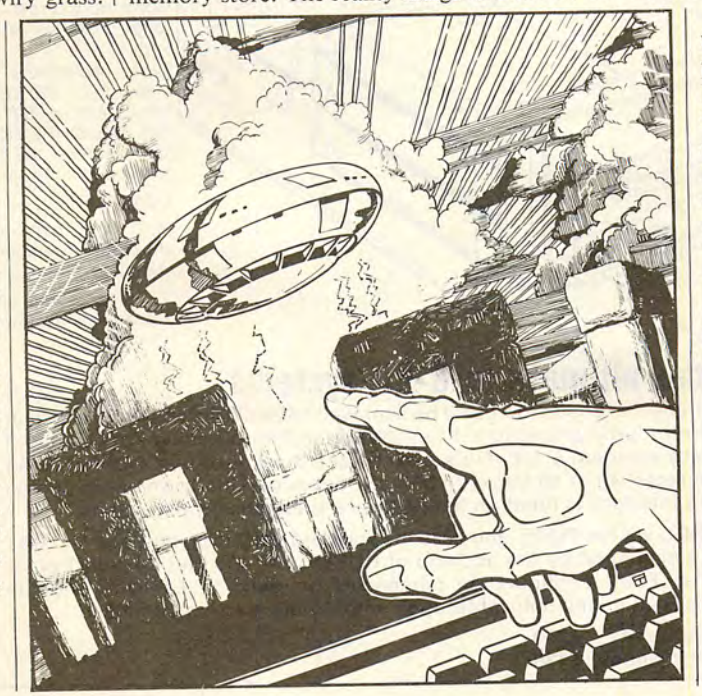
The Observer grimaced. "Look's like a soft error to me," he said.

"But the size of it!" retorted the Operator. "Most SE's I've seen have been spectacular but short, and the monitor program's repair section can design round them, but this — this extends through almost half the index. That's over a billion years system time!" His awed voice became plaintive.

We'll never rescue this one!" The Observer had been listening to Control. "They say that at present rate their Monitor Program/Cosmos simulator predicts a zero match — disaster — in less than 5,000 years system time, and that the divergence will be uncorrectable within 2,000 years, which is about two minutes real time. They regret that the back-up file has been mislaid, and anyway things look too far gone for Transfer. They suggest we scratch, and start again."

The Operator sighed. "How many times will that be?!

I've lost count," the Observer smiled wryly, "but it's given us so much trouble I'm beginning to wonder if we'll ever get the bugs out of this Cosmos." He turned to the Operator: "OK, take it away!"



The Operator manually unlocked and removed a protective cover, revealing the Reset key. He glanced at the image, currently showing a silvery-white craft of some sort lifting off with no visible means of support from the stone circle, now clearly a landing cradle. The tracer flashed an angry crimson

Matching no longer meaningful
Divergence critical at over 10 major points, and increasing.
Recommend Abort Cosmos.

He turned to the Observer, who nodded and depressed the key. The image cleared, and the viewer showed nothing but a centrally located hard point of light. The tracer P/T-M output, now in soft green, said, complacently,

Cosmic Centre; 0.0000000.
Match perfect.
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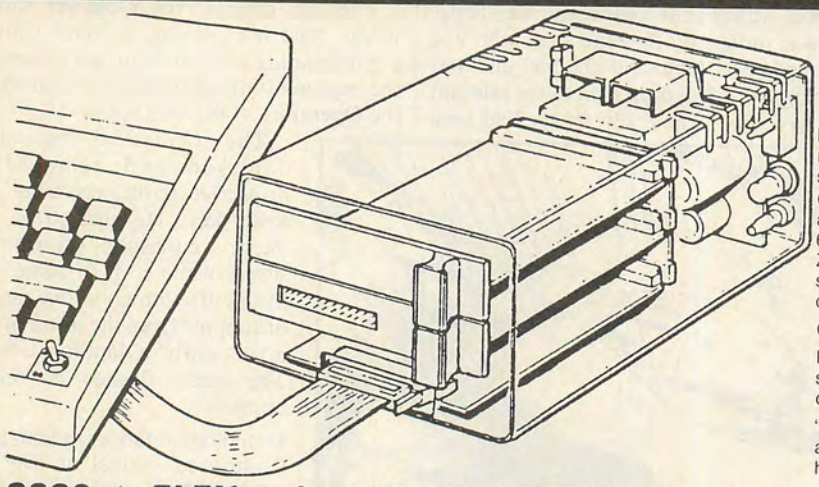

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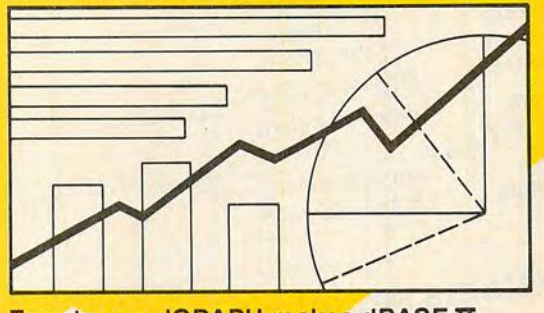

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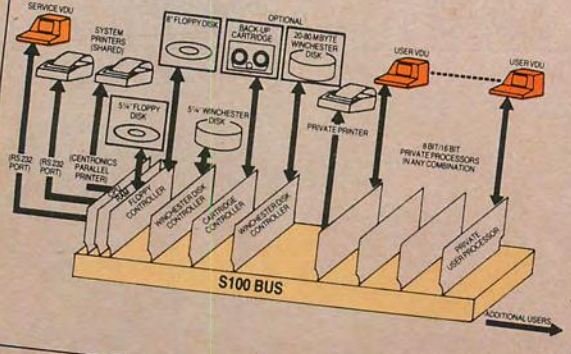

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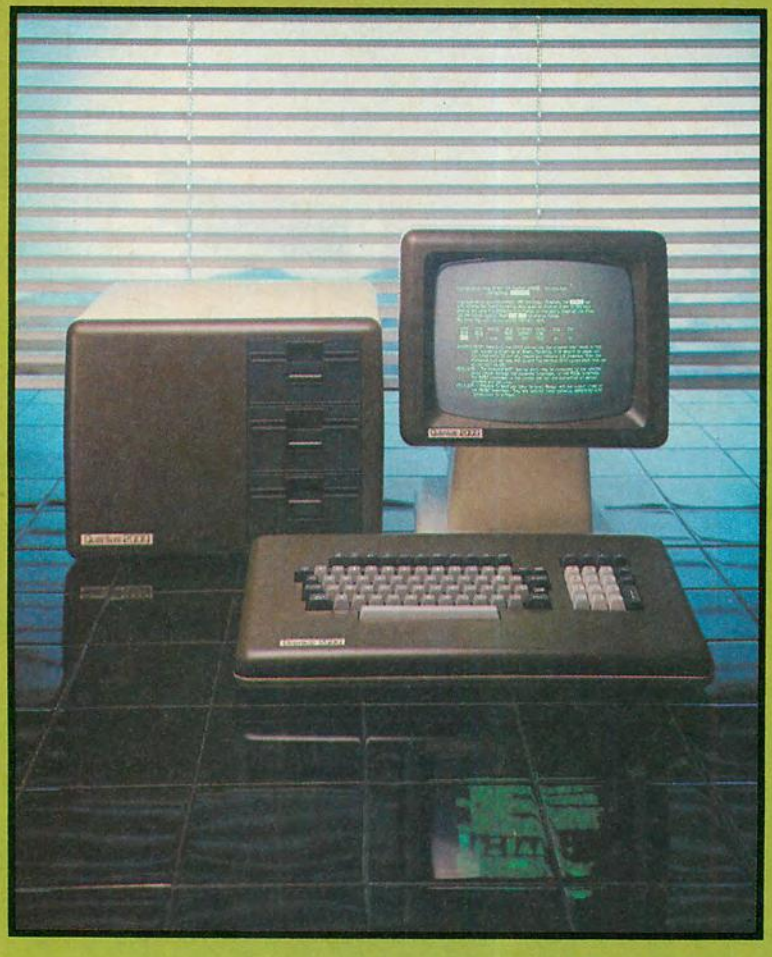

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Open File is the part of the magazine written by the readers of *Practical Computing*. All aspects of microcomputing are covered, from games to serious business software and utilities. Fully-debugged programs can be submitted for any micro, and for standard CP/M machines such as the Osborne and Superbrain. Programs can be in machine code or any language, including Forth and Pascal.

Submissions should include a brief description which explains what your program does, and how it does it. If possible it should be typed, with lines double-spaced. We need a printed program listing. Hand-written listings cannot be accepted. A tape or disc of the program helps if it is in a standard format.

When printing listings, please remember to use a new ribbon or double-intensity printing — faint listings reproduce badly. Use plain paper only, and try to list the program across either a 35-character or a 70-character width. Also, make sure all special graphics or inverse-video characters are either listed correctly or else include Rem statements to explain them fully.

Each program listing, tape or disc must have your name and address on it, or we cannot promise its safe return. A stamped addressed envelope is appreciated.

If you write in with a comment, correction or enquiry please remember to state the machine and the program title.

We pay at least £10 for any programs used, or £35 per page and pro rata for part pages.

>SINCLAIR

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A copying utility which declares the start and end addresses of the program.

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Tabulate text as well as numerical data with a modification to the Print Using command.

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183 ORIC OTHELLO
The classic game translated for the 48K Oric by Gary Nugent.

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User-defined problems

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS with user-defined graphics on the Spectrum is that they are rather difficult to define, writes Crispen Read of Henlow, Bedfordshire. The other is that there are not enough of them. The character generator and editor overcomes both these problems.

Normally a Spectrum has 21 graphics characters which can be defined by Poking into the address given by USR "A". This program allows you to redefine the other 96 ASCII characters in the Spectrum by copying the character set in ROM, starting at address 156616, into the RAM starting at address 31831. The character-set pointer, Chars, is then made to point at the character set in RAM, and because it is in RAM the character set can be changed.

To define a character you select option 5 of the menu. The screen then displays a set of on-screen instructions around a large square. A four-cell cursor can be moved around the screen by using the arrow keys on the keyboard; there is no need to press Shift. When the cursor is turned on it leaves a trail on the screen; when it is turned off it rubs out anything it passes over and can therefore be used to move the cursor around the square without leaving a trail, or for deleting a small mistake.

When you have finished composing your masterpiece it can be entered into the character set using option 1. The program then asks you which character you wish to change. When you have typed the character and pressed Enter, the program will take the bit pattern off the screen. To do so it performs a binary-to-decimal-conversion using the ATTR function to read the blocks in the square.

The decimal value is then Poked into RAM in the normal way — see line 5850. This address is found using the expression:

31575 + (8*CODE C$) + COUNTER 2

where C$ is the string variable holding the character to be changed, 31575 is the start address of the RAM character set, and Counter 2 is the counter for the memory location of the bit pattern, which starts at zero and goes up to 7.

While using the graphics editor it is also possible to enlarge a character in the set on to the square. This is particularly useful for making small alterations to a character in the set or taking a detailed look at the bit patterns of the characters. If you make a mess of drawing a character you can clear the square by pressing 4. To return to the menu press 3. A reminder of which button does what is displayed on the screen.

To replace one character with another from the keyboard use option 4. The program then asks you to enter two characters. The first will be replaced by the second, a message will be briefly flashed on the screen and the program will return them to the menu. This can be useful for doing things like replacing the * with an x or changing (to [.

The program can save character sets, which can be loaded again with or without the program. To save a character set use menu option 2. The program will ask you for a file name, which must be between one and ten characters in length. You will need to take note of the file name, as you will need it when reloading, using option 1.

To load a character set without the program type:

LOAD"filename" CODE 31831,1016

Once the set is loaded type:

POKE 23606,87:POKE 23607,123

Make these Pokes a one-line instruction, and check them before pressing Enter.

The program is well labelled with Rems, which may be left out if you wish.

```
  10 REM ************************
  20 REM *                      *
  30 REM * CHARACTER GENERATER  *
  40 REM *      AND   EDITOR    *
  50 REM *                      *
  60 REM * © 1983 Crispin Read  *
  70 REM *                      *
  90 REM ************************
 100 REM IF CHARACTER SET IS NOT
 110 REM IN RAM THEN COPY IT
 120 REM INTO RAM
 130 IF PEEK 23606+256*PEEK 2360
7<>31575 THEN GO SUB 3000
 140 REM          MENU
 150 CLS
 160 PRINT "PRESS,,,"
 170 PRINT '''" 1)TO LOAD A CHARA
CTER SET FROM TAPE"
 180 PRINT '''" 2)TO SAVE A CHARC
TER SET TO    TAPE"
 190 PRINT '''" 3)TO MAKE THE RAM
 CHARACTER SET THE SAME AS THE R
OM"
 200 PRINT '''" 4)TO EXCHANGE ONE
 CHARACTER    WITH ANOTHER FROM
THE KEYBOARD"
 210 PRINT '''" 5)TO USE THE GRAP
HICS EDITOR"
 220 PRINT '" 6)TO STOP"
 230 LET I$=INKEY$
 240 REM IF NO KEY OR A KEY
 250 REM OTHER THAN 1-6 IS
 260 REM PRESSED THEN INPUT
 270 REM KEY AGAIN
 280 IF I$="" THEN GO TO 230
 290 IF CODE I$<49 OR CODE I$>54
 THEN GO TO 230
 300 IF I$="6" THEN STOP
 310 GO SUB 1000*VAL I$
 320 GO TO 150
 995 REM ***********************
1000 REM  SET LOADING ROUTINE
1005 REM ***********************
1010 CLS
1020 PRINT INVERSE 1; BRIGHT 1;"
   READY TO LOAD CHARACTER SET
"
1030 PRINT '''"What is the casse
tte copy of the character set ca
lled? (10 char-acters Max.)"
1040 INPUT LINE N$
1050 IF N$="" OR LEN N$>10 THEN
PRINT '''"INVALID FILE NAME..TRY
 AGAIN": GO TO 1030
1060 CLS
1070 PRINT INVERSE 1;"LOADING ";
N$;" FROM TAPE"
1075 PRINT ''' FLASH 1; BRIGHT
1;"PRESS PLAY ON TAPE RECORDER"
1080 LOAD N$CODE 31831,1016
1090 BEEP 1,0
1095 CLS
1100 PRINT INVERSE 1; BRIGHT 1;
FLASH 1;AT 0,5;"CHARACTER SET LO
ADED"
1110 PAUSE 100
1120 RETURN
1995 REM ***********************
2000 REM  SET SAVING ROUTINE
2005 REM ***********************
2010 CLS
2020 PRINT INVERSE 1; BRIGHT 1;"
   READY TO SAVE CHARACTER SET  "
2030 PRINT '''"What do you want
to call the    cassette copy of
the character  set? (10 characte
rs Max.)"
2040 INPUT LINE N$
2050 IF N$="" OR LEN N$>10 THEN
PRINT '''"INVALID FILE NAME..TRY
AGAIN": GO TO 2030
2060 SAVE N$CODE 31831,1016
2070 CLS
2080 BEEP 1,0
2090 PRINT INVERSE 1; BRIGHT 1;
FLASH 1;"CHARACTER SET SAVED"
2100 PAUSE 100
2110 RETURN
2995 REM ***********************
3000 REM ROM TO RAM CHARACTER
3010 REM        SET MOVE
3015 REM ***********************
3020 CLS : PRINT INVERSE 1;"    M
OVING CHARACTER SET NOW    "
3030 REM MOVE RAMTOP DOWN TO
```

(listing continued on page 148)

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PC2

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(listing continued from page 146)

```
3040 REM BELLOW THE RAM
3050 REM CHARACTER SET
3060 POKE 23730,87
3070 POKE 23731,123
3080 LET COUNTER 1=0
3090 LET ROM ADDRESS=15360
3100 FOR A=ROM ADDRESS+256 TO RO
M ADDRESS+1024
3110 POKE 31831+COUNTER 1,PEEK A
3120 LET COUNTER 1=COUNTER 1+1
3130 NEXT A
3140 REM TELL THE COMPUTER WHERE
3150 REM TO LOOK FOR THE RAM
3160 REM BASED CHARACTER SET
3170 POKE 23606,87
3180 POKE 23607,INT 123
3190 RETURN
3995 REM ************************
4000 REM    CHARACTER EXCHANGE
4005 REM ************************
4010 CLS : INPUT "ENTER CHARACTE
R TO CHANGE";C$
4020 INPUT "ENTER NEW CHARACTER"
;R$
4030 FOR A=0 TO 7
4040 POKE 31575+(8*CODE C$)+A,PE
EK (31575+8*CODE R$+A)
4050 NEXT A
4060 CLS : PRINT INVERSE 1; BRIG
HT 1;"       CHARACTER REPLACED
"
4070 BEEP 1,0: PAUSE 100
4080 RETURN
4995 REM ************************
5000 REM    GRAPHICS EDITER
5005 REM ************************
5010 CLS
5020 REM DRAW THE ON SCREEN
5030 REM INSTRUCTIONS AND THE
5040 REM EDITING GRID
5050 PRINT AT 1,0;"PRESS..."
5060 PRINT AT 3,0;" 1-TO ENTER";
AT 4,0;"CHARACTER INTO";AT 5,0;"
SET"
5070 PRINT AT 6,0;" 2-TO VIEW";A
T 7,0;"CHARACTER FROM";AT 8,0;"S
ET"
5080 PRINT AT 9,0;" 3-TO EXIT";
5090 PRINT AT 10,0;" 4-TO CLEAR"
;AT 11,0;"GRID"
5100 PRINT AT 19,0;"TO MOVE CURS
OR";AT 20,0;"USE ARROW KEYS. TO
TURN CURSOR  ON AND OFF PRESS ""
0"" AND ""9"""
5110 PLOT 119,152
5120 DRAW 129,0
5130 DRAW 0,-129
5140 DRAW -129,0
5150 DRAW 0,129
5160 REM  DEFINE  VARIABLES
5170 LET X=15: LET X1=X
5180 LET Y=3: LET Y1=Y
5190 LET MARKER=0
5210 REM ENTER INSTRUCTION
5220 LET I$=INKEY$
5230 REM IF NOTHING OR AN
5240 REM UNKNOWN COMMAND IS
5250 REM ENTED THEN TRY AGAIN
5260 IF I$="" THEN GO TO 5220
5270 IF CODE I$<48 OR CODE I$>57
 THEN GO TO 5220
5280 GO SUB 5320+(300*VAL I$)
5290 GO SUB 8500
5300 GO TO 5220
5315 REM ************************
5320 REM      TURN CURSOR ON
5325 REM ************************
5330 LET MARKER=1
5340 RETURN
5570 REM ************************
5580 REM  TAKE CHARACTER FROM
5590 REM    GRID AND ENTER IT
5600 REM         INTO SET
5610 REM ************************
5620 INPUT "TYPE CHARACTER TO CH
ANGE ";C$
5630 REM IF CHARACTER CODE IS
5640 REM OK THEN REDIFINE IT
5650 REM IF NOT SAY SO AND
5660 REM RETURN TO MENU
5670 IF CODE C$>32 AND CODE C$<1
28 THEN GO TO 5710
5680 CLS : PRINT INVERSE 1; BRIG
HT 1;"THAT CHARACTER CAN'T BE CH
ANGED"
5690 BEEP 1,0
5700 GO TO 140
5710 REM FILL CURSOR POSITION
5720 REM WITH APPROPRATE BLOCK
5730 IF MARKER=1 THEN PRINT AT Y
,X; INK 2;"▀▀";AT Y+1,X; INK 2;"
▀▀": GO TO 5750
5740 PRINT AT Y,X;"  ";AT Y+1,X;
"  "
5750 REM READ BIT PATTERN FROM
5760 REM SCREEN
5770 LET COUNTER 2=0
5780 FOR L=3 TO 18 STEP 2
5790 LET POWER=7
5800 LET TOTAL=0
5810 FOR C=15 TO 30 STEP 2
5820 IF ATTR (L,C)=58 THEN LET T
OTAL=TOTAL+2↑POWER
5830 LET POWER=POWER-1
5840 NEXT C
5850 POKE 31575+(8*CODE C$)+COUN
TER 2,TOTAL
5860 LET COUNTER 2=COUNTER 2+1
5870 NEXT L
5880 RETURN
5910 REM ************************
5920 REM    CHARACTER ENLARGER
5925 REM ************************
5930 LET LINES=1
5940 LET COLUMNS=13
5950 INPUT "ENTER CHARACTER TO V
IEW ";V$
5960 FOR A=0 TO 7
5970 LET DECIMAL=PEEK (31575+8*C
ODE V$+A)
5980 LET LINES=LINES+2
5990 LET COLUMNS=13
6000 FOR B=7 TO 0 STEP -1
6005 LET COLUMNS=COLUMNS+2
6010 LET BIT=2↑B
6020 IF DECIMAL>=BIT THEN PRINT
AT LINES,COLUMNS; INK 2;"▀▀";AT
LINES+1,COLUMNS; INK 2;"▀▀": LET
 DECIMAL=DECIMAL-BIT: NEXT B: NE
XT A: RETURN
6030 PRINT AT LINES,COLUMNS;"  "
;AT LINES+1,COLUMNS;"  "
6040 NEXT B
6050 NEXT A
6060 RETURN
6210 REM ************************
6220 REM  EXIT GRAPHICS EDITOR
6225 REM ************************
6230 GO TO 140
6510 REM ************************
6520 REM      CLEAR SCREEN
6525 REM ************************
6530 GO TO 5000
6810 REM ************************
6820 REM      CURSOR LEFT
6825 REM ************************
6830 LET X=X-2
6840 RETURN
7110 REM ************************
7120 REM      CURSOR DOWN
7125 REM ************************
7130 LET Y=Y+2
7140 RETURN
7410 REM ************************
7420 REM        CURSOR UP
7425 REM ************************
7430 LET Y=Y-2
7440 RETURN
7710 REM ************************
7720 REM     CURSOR RIGHT
7725 REM ************************
7730 LET X=X+2
7740 RETURN
8010 REM ************************
8020 REM     TURN CURSOR OFF
8025 REM ************************
8030 LET MARKER=0
8040 RETURN
8490 REM ************************
8500 REM      CURSOR PRINT
8505 REM ************************
8510 REM CHEAK X AND Y CHORDS
8520 REM ARE WITHIN GRID
8530 IF X<15 OR X>30 THEN LET X=
X1
8540 IF Y<3 OR Y>17 THEN LET Y=Y
1
8550 REM IS CURSOR ON/OFF
8560 IF MARKER=1 THEN PRINT AT Y
1,X1; INK 2;"▀▀";AT Y1+1,X1;"▀▀"
: LET I=2: GO TO 8580
8570 PRINT AT Y1,X1;"  ";AT Y1+1
,X1;"  ": LET I=5
8580 PRINT AT Y,X; INK I; FLASH
1;"▄▄";AT Y+1,X; INK I; FLASH 1;
"▄▄"
8590 LET X1=X
8600 LET Y1=Y
8610 RETURN
```

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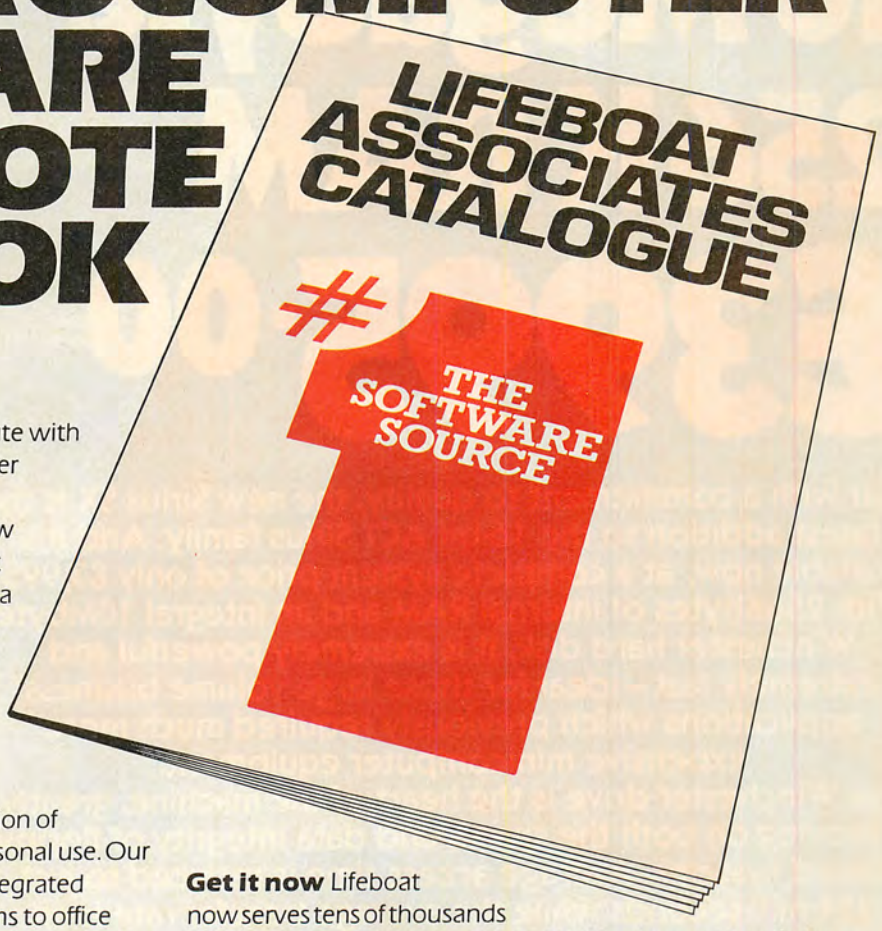

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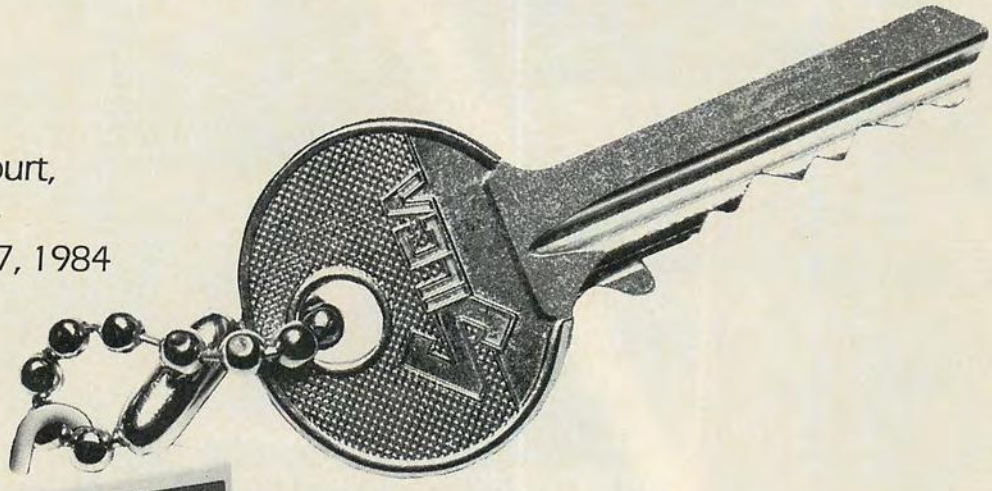

software '84
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EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE

Screen routines

IT IS A FAIRLY simple task to save a copy of the screen to disc and then read it back again as required. L V Turner of Colchester has provided two simple routines to do it.

The screen occupies memory locations 32768 to 33767, and the first program simply fools the Pet into thinking that its current Basic program occupies the same memory space as these locations — lines 30 and 35 — and then performs the Save routine.

After the Save is complete, these pointers must be restored to what they were. The program does this in lines 50 and 55. The Pokes to 40 and 41 reset the start of the Basic program, which on the Pet is constant, but the pointer to the end of the program is different for different programs, and so must be reset to its original value. This is done by first preserving the values in memory locations 1 and 2 and Poking them back afterwards.

Loading the screen back again is also very simple, as shown in the second listing. Unfortunately a Load command issued from within a program assumes that a new program has just been loaded. It also starts the new program running from the beginning, although all variables are preserved to allow programs to be chained together.

Arrangements therefore need to be made to allow the Load command to be executed only once, otherwise every time the screen is loaded, the program will restart and the screen will be loaded, and the program will restart, and so on.

The first time through the program, all variables will be reset to zero and so X = 0 and the screen will be loaded. By resetting X to 1 before performing the Load, X will still be 1 when the program is restarted, and the simple test in line 20 will prevent the screen being loaded again.

To use this routine anywhere other than at the begining of a program could be tricky, but it is certainly not impossible with a little imagination.

Unfortunately, the cassette routines on the Pet do not allow memory locations beyond 32767 to be saved, so it is not possible to use this technique with cassettes.

Mr Turner has also provided an unusual way of manipulating the contents of the screen. The machine-code program set up by the Basic loader will transfer each line of the screen into an array.

Line 20 sets up the screen and preserves a suitable work area at the upper limit of memory. The values given are for a 16K, Basic 2 Pet. Lines 2000 to 3020 perform the machine-code loading function, and once this section had been executed, the command Sys 15194 will transfer lines 0 to 24 into the array starting at SC$(0) and ending at SC$(24). In the transfer, all characters are converted from their screen values to their ASCII values, and all reverse-field characters are retuned to normal.

The program could be modified for larger or smaller Pets. Unfortunately, Basic 4 operates its strings in rather a different way to Basic 2 so this routine is unlikely to be easily modified for Basic 4 Pets.

Save screen.

```
10 REM ****************************
11 REM *                          *
12 REM *   SAVE SCREEN TO DISK    *
13 REM *                          *
14 REM ****************************

20 POKE1,PEEK(42):POKE(2),PEEK(43)
30 POKE40,0  :POKE41,128
35 POKE42,232:POKE43,131

40 SAVE"0:SCREEN",8

50 POKE40,0       :POKE41,4
55 POKE42,PEEK(1):POKE43,PEEK(2)
```

Load screen.

```
10 REM ****************************
11 REM *                          *
12 REM *  LOAD SCREEN FROM DISK   *
13 REM *                          *
14 REM ****************************

20 IF X THEN 40
30 X=1:LOAD"0:SCREEN",8

40 REM CONTINUE WITH PROGRAM
```

Screen to array: Basic loader.

```
10 REM ****************************
11 REM *                          *
12 REM *  COPY SCREEN INTO SC$    *
13 REM *                          *
14 REM ****************************

20 POKE59468,14:POKE52,80:POKE53,59:CLR
30 DIM SC$(24)

2000 S=15194
2010 FORI=S TO S+152
2020 READ A
2030 POKE I,A:C=C+A
2040 NEXT
2050 READ A
2060 IF A<>C THEN PRINT"CHECKSUM ERROR"

3000 DATA 169,128,141,106,59,169,60,141
3001 DATA 120,59,160,4,162,0,189,0,132
3002 DATA 41,127,201,64,144,3,24,105,64
3003 DATA 105,64
3004 DATA 157,0,64,232,208,236,238,106
3005 DATA 59,238,120,59,136,208,225
3006 DATA 165,44,133,84,165,45,133,85
3007 DATA 160,0,177,84,201,83,208,7
3008 DATA 200,177,84,201,195,240,26,160
3009 DATA 2,177,84,133,86,200,177,84
3010 DATA 133,87,24,165,84,101,86
3011 DATA 133,84,165,85,101,87,133,85
3012 DATA 144,215,24,165,84,105,7,133
3013 DATA 84,165,85,105,0,133,85,169
3014 DATA 40,133,86,169,60,133,88,169
3015 DATA 0,133,87,168,165,86,145,84
3016 DATA 200,165,87,145,84,200,165,88
3017 DATA 145,84,200,192,75,240,13,24
3018 DATA 165,87,101,86,133,87,165,88
3019 DATA 105,0,133,88,144,222,96
3020 DATA 17836
```

Screen to array: disassembled version.

```
3B5A A9 80      LDA #$80
3B5C 8D 6A 3B   STA $3B6A
3B5F A9 3C      LDA #$3C
3B61 8D 78 3B   STA $3B78
3B64 A0 04      LDY #$04
3B66 A2 00      LDX #$00
3B68 BD 00 84   LDA $8400,X
3B6B 29 7F      AND #$7F
3B6D C9 40      CMP #$40
```

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```
3B6F 90 03      BCC $3B74
3B71 18         CLC
3B72 69 40      ADC #$40
3B74 69 40      ADC #$40
3B76 9D 00 40   STA $4000,X
3B79 E8         INX
3B7A D0 EC      BNE $3B68
3B7C EE 6A 3B   INC $3B6A
3B7F EE 78 3B   INC $3B78
3B82 88         DEY
3B83 D0 E1      BNE $3B66
3B85 A5 2C      LDA $2C
3B87 85 54      STA $54
3B89 A5 2D      LDA $2D
3B8B 85 55      STA $55
3B8D A0 00      LDY #$00
3B8F B1 54      LDA ($54),Y
3B91 C9 53      CMP #$53
3B93 D0 07      BNE $3B9C
3B95 C8         INY
3B96 B1 54      LDA ($54),Y
3B98 C9 C3      CMP #$C3
3B9A F0 1A      BEQ $3BB6
3B9C A0 02      LDY #$02
3B9E B1 54      LDA ($54),Y
3BA0 85 56      STA $56
3BA2 C8         INY
3BA3 B1 54      LDA ($54),Y
3BA5 85 57      STA $57
3BA7 18         CLC
3BA8 A5 54      LDA $54
3BAA 65 56      ADC $56
3BAC 85 54      STA $54
3BAE A5 55      LDA $55
3BB0 65 57      ADC $57
3BB2 85 55      STA $55
3BB4 90 D7      BCC $3B8D
3BB6 18         CLC
3BB7 A5 54      LDA $54
3BB9 69 07      ADC #$07
3BBB 85 54      STA $54
3BBD A5 55      LDA $55
3BBF 69 00      ADC #$00
3BC1 85 55      STA $55
3BC3 A9 28      LDA #$28
3BC5 85 56      STA $56
3BC7 A9 3C      LDA #$3C
3BC9 85 58      STA $58
3BCB A9 00      LDA #$00
3BCD 85 57      STA $57
3BCF A8         TAY
3BD0 A5 56      LDA $56
3BD2 91 54      STA ($54),Y
3BD4 C8         INY
3BD5 A5 57      LDA $57
3BD7 91 54      STA ($54),Y
3BD9 C8         INY
3BDA A5 58      LDA $58
3BDC 91 54      STA ($54),Y
3BDE C8         INY
3BDF C0 4B      CPY #$4B
3BE1 F0 0D      BEQ $3BF0
3BE3 18         CLC
3BE4 A5 57      LDA $57
3BE6 65 56      ADC $56
3BE8 85 57      STA $57
3BEA A5 58      LDA $58
3BEC 69 00      ADC #$00
3BEE 85 58      STA $58
3BF0 90 DE      BCC $3BD0
3BF2 60         RTS
```

Writing letters

If you have a Pet and an Epson MX-80 printer, but not the luxury of a word-processor package, then the Letter Writer program from A Peake of Swansea may be just what you are looking for. It can cope with text up to 2K characters long, though it does not include provision for saving to tape or disc.

The program holds the text in a reserved

(continued on page 156)

Writing letters.

```
10 REM LETTER WRITER. A PEAKE. 4/83.
11 REM ADDRESS IN LINES 112-116.

100 L =10 : REM LEFT MARGIN.
102 R =70 : REM RIGHT MARGIN.
106 PA= 5 : REM PARAGRAPH INDENT.

110 DATA 5: REM LINES IN OWN ADDRESS.
112 DATA "70 Higher Lane","Mumbles
114 DATA "Swansea","SA3 4PD"
116 DATA "(0792) 69885

119 REM FOR 8/16K PETS POKE 53,24/56 & M=6145/14337. 32K PET GIVE
     N.
120 IF PEEK(53)<>120 THEN POKE 53,120:RUN:RESERVES 2K OF MEMORY S
     TARTING AT M
130 M=30721:IF PEEK(M)=170 THEN POKE M,0:POKE M+2046,0:REM SWITCH
     ON VALUE
140 DIM P$(45):REM ALLOWS 45 LINES OF TEXT, OR USE P$(1.2*2048/(R
     -L))
145 N=M:POKE 59468,14: REM LOWER CASE
150 PRINT"[CLR]","Letter Writer",,,"==============[CD][CD]
160 PRINT,"1) Write a letter.[CD]
165 PRINT,"2) Continue with letter.[CD]
170 PRINT,"3) Check if letter in memory.[CD]
175 PRINT,"4) Send a letter to printer.[CD]
180 PRINT,"5) Finish.[CD][CD]
200 PRINT"[REV]Which number please? ";
210 GET A$:IF A$="" THEN 210
220 A=(ASC(A$)AND127)-48: REM ALLOW SHIFTED FIGURES
230 IF A<1 OR A>5 THEN 210
240 PRINT A:PRINT:M=N
250 ON A GOTO 1000, 270, 280,3000
260 END
270 F=2:GOSUB 500:GOTO 2000
280 GOSUB 500:PRINT:PRINT:GOTO 160

499 REM PRINT FROM MEMORY TO SCREEN
500 PRINT "[CLR]"
510 PRINT "[HOM]":M=N:C=0
520 A=PEEK(M):IF A>0 THEN PRINT CHR$(A);:M=M+1:C=-(C+1)*(A<>13):G
     OTO 520
530 IF F=1 THEN POKE M-1,0:F=2:GOTO 510: JUMP TO PREVIOUS PARAGRA
     PH
540 IF F=2 THEN F=0:M=M-C:REM EXIT WITH CURRENT M & C
550 RETURN

599 REM PICK UP 1 LINE OF 'C' CHARACTERS & SKIP LEADING SPACE
600 P$="":C=R-L+PA*(P$(P)>""):IF PEEK(M)=32 THEN M=M+1
610 FOR A=M TO M+C:B=PEEK(A):P$=P$+CHR$(B)
620 IF B=0 OR B=13 THEN M=A+1:B=0:RETURN
630 NEXT:M=A:RETURN

699 REMOVES PART WORD AT END OF LINE
700 C=LEN(P$)
710 FOR A=C TO 1 STEP -1:IF MID$(P$,A,1)<>" " THEN NEXT
720 IF A=0 THEN P$=LEFT$(P$,C-1)+"-":M=M-1:RETURN: NO SPACES SO I
     NSERT HYPHEN
730 P$=LEFT$(P$,A):M=M-C+A
740 RETURN
797 REM"convert PET codes in p$ to EPSON codes in k$
798 REM PET CAPITALS ARE 128 ABOVE LOWER CASE
799 REM MX80 CAPITALS ARE 32 BELOW LOWER CASE
800 K$="":FOR C=1 TO LEN(P$):A=ASC(MID$(P$,C,1)):B=A AND 127
810 IF B>63 THEN B=B-32*(A=B)
820 K$=K$+CHR$(B):NEXT
830 RETURN

999 REM NOW EXTRACT DATA FROM USER
1000 PRINT"Please type the 'TO' address -[CD]
1010 PRINT"Type 'none' if you don't want one.
```

(listing continued on page 156)

The £ sign should be entered as #. Cursor controls are shown in square brackets: for example, [CL] means cursor left.

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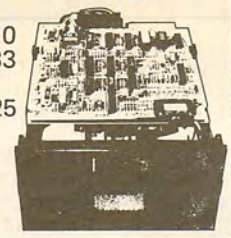

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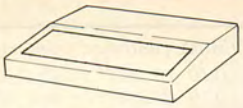

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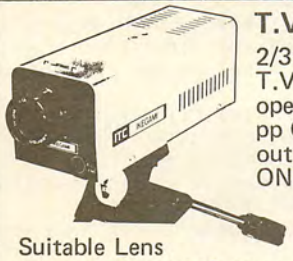

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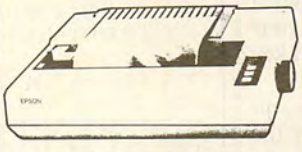

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(continued from page 154)

area of memory, rather than in string variables. This area is protected in lines 120 and 130, and the values given are for a 32K Pet — other values for 16K and 8K Pets are given in line 119.

Your own address should be inserted in the Data statements in lines 112 to 116, with the first Data statement in line 110 giving the number of lines in the address.

The Print command at the start of line 2010 is actually the program's own cursor. It is obtained by Shift-&, which gives the chequer-board characters. In lines 1220 and 3210 the maximum length of the address lines is assumed to be 15.

Because text is held in protected memory it is not lost if the program aborts for any reason. Simply run the program again, select option 1, re-enter the headings. When the program says "continue with your letter" — see line 1330 — press the Del key and the text will reappear.

Although designed for use with an MX-80 printer, there is no reason why the program should not work with the MX-100 or the FX-80 printers. It should also run satisfactorily on a Commodore 64.

Crash-proof input

The Pet's annoying habit of aborting a program after the Return key is pressed in response to an input prompt has caused many headaches for programmers and users alike. Many solutions to the problem have been published over the years, from specially written input routines to using the keyboard as an input file. However, Doug Maloney of Cleveland has reminded me of one of the simplest fixes known. It is simply:

```
10 POKE 14, 1

20 INPUT " : " ; A$

30 PRINT

40 POKE 14, 0
```

Line 10 simply tells the Pet that input is coming from an external device. No question mark prompt is therefore required, and null input is to be ignored. Line 20 performs a normal input with a colon as prompt.

Line 30 forces the cursor to return to the next line as the Return at the end of the input is not echoed back to the screen as it would normally be. Thus, the cursor ends up exactly where it was when the Return key was pressed. Finally, line 40 returns everything to normal.

The prompt in the Input command is important as it prevents a null input being accepted. In that case A$ would be set to a null string. But if that is in fact what is required the prompt could be omitted; the program will still not abort if Return is pressed with no input. Only a string variable should be used. A numeric variable would result in an error being generated; a numeric response is simply obtained using the Val function. µ

(listing continued from page 154)

```
1020 PRINT"and also after the last line.[CD]
1030 PRINT"Press RETURN at the end of each line.[CD]
1040 PRINT"Address:-":OPEN1,0:A=1:REM IMPROVES PET'S DODGY INPUT
     ROUTINE
1050 PRINT"Line";A;"is ? ";:INPUT£1,A$:PRINT
1060 IF A$<>"none" THEN AD$(A)=A$:A=A+1:GOTO 1050
1070 CLOSE1:AD$(0)=STR$(A-1):IF A=1 THEN 1200
1080 PRINT:FOR B=1 TO A-1:PRINT,AD$(B):NEXT
1090 PRINT:PRINT"[REV]Is this correct (y or n)? ":
1100 GET A$:IF A$="" OR (A$<>"y" AND A$<>"n") THEN 1100
1110 PRINT A$:PRINT:IF A$="n" THEN 1000
1200 PRINT"[CD]Type the date,('none' if not wanted),   followed b
     y RETURN? ";
1210 OPEN1,0:INPUT£1,A$:PRINT:CLOSE1
1220 PRINT:IF LEN(A$)<16 THEN 1250
1230 PRINT "[REV]";A$;"[OFF] is too long -
1240 PRINT"Would you shorten it please?":GOTO 1210
1250 DT$="":IF A$<>"none" THEN DT$=A$
1300 PRINT"The 'Greeting' (Dear Sir / Your Grace / Mrs Smith) ? "
     ;
1310 OPEN1,0:INPUT£1,TL$:PRINT:CLOSE1
1320 PRINT"[CD]Now continue with your letter, using
1330 PRINT"RETURN only at the end of a paragraph.[CD]"

1999 REM GET A CHARACTER AND CHECK IT
2000 IF M+C>N+2045 THEN 2100:REM CHECK ROOM
2010 PRINT"^&[CL]";:REM PRINT OWN CURSOR OF SHIFTED &
2020 GET A$:IF A$="" THEN 2020
2030 PRINT" [CL]";:A=ASC(A$):B=A AND 127: REMOVE CURSOR & UNSHIFT
      A$
2040 IF B<32 OR B>95 OR B=34 THEN 2060
2050 A=B-128*(A>192):PRINT CHR$(A);:POKE M+C,A:C=C+1:GOTO 2000
2060 IF B=13 THEN PRINT:POKE M+C,B:POKE M+C+1,0:GOTO 160
2070 IF B=20 AND C=0 THEN F=1:GOSUB 500:GOTO 2000: ALLOWS DELETE
     KEY
2080 IF B=20 THEN PRINT CHR$(B);:POKE M+C,0:C=C-1:POKE M+C,0
2090 GOTO 2000

2100 PRINT:PRINT"There is no more room left. I advise
2110 PRINT"option '4' below, followed by '1'.[CD]
2120 GOTO 160

2999 REM PUTS BODY OF LETTER INTO ARRAY P$(P) FOR FASTER COPIES
3000 M=N:P=0:P$(0)=CHR$(9):PRINT,"[CD][CD]Please Wait.
3010 GOSUB 600 : REM PICKUP 1 LINE
3020 IF B>0 AND PEEK(M)<>32 THEN GOSUB 700: REMOVE PART WORD
3030 GOSUB 800 : REM AND CONVERT FOR PRINTER
3040 P$(P)=P$(P)+K$:P=P+1:P$(P)=""
3050 IF B=13 THEN P$(P)=CHR$(9): REM PARAGRAPH INDENT (2ND TAB)
3060 IF B>0 THEN 3010
3070 W=P-1: REMEMBER NUMBER OF LINES

3099 REM FIRE UP PRINTER
3100 PRINT"[CLR]","PLEASE CHECK -[CD][CD]
3110 PRINT"1)  The Printer is ON,[CD]
3120 PRINT"2)  the READY light is ON
3130 PRINT"    (press 'ON LINE' button if not),[CD]
3140 PRINT"3)  there is paper in the machine.[CD][CD][CD]
3150 PRINT"    Press SPACE BAR when ready.
3159 REM PET ABORTS IF PRINTER NOT READY, SO- WAIT FOR SPACE
3160 WAIT 59410,4,4:POKE 158,0 : REM THEN CLEAR KEY BUFFER

3200 E$=CHR$(27):A$=CHR$(9)+CHR$(9)+CHR$(9):OPEN4,4
3210 PRINT£4,E$;"d";CHR$(L);CHR$(L+PA);CHR$(R-15);CHR$(0):REM SET
      TABS
3220 PRINT£4,E$;"O";E$;"e":REM LINE SPACING & EMPHASISED ADDRESS
3230 RESTORE:READ P:FOR D=1 TO P:READ P$:GOSUB 800:REM YOUR ADDRE
     SS
3240 PRINT£4,A$;K$:NEXT:PRINT£4,E$;"f":REM CANCELS E$;"e"
3250 IF DT$>"" THEN P$=DT$:GOSUB 800:PRINT£4,A$;K$:REM DATE
3260 P=VAL(AD$(0)):IF P=0 THEN 3300
3270 FOR D=1 TO P:P$=AD$(D):GOSUB 800:REM HIS/HER ADDRESS
3280 PRINT£4,CHR$(9);K$:NEXT
3300 PRINT£4,E$;"2":REM LINE SPACING
3310 P$=TL$:GOSUB 800:PRINT£4,CHR$(9);K$
3319 REM ALL THIS FOR THE SAKE OF THE NEXT LINE!
3320 FOR P=0 TO W:PRINT£4,CHR$(9);P$(P):NEXT
3330 PRINT£4,CHR$(7):CLOSE4:PRINT

3400 PRINT"[CD][CD][REV]Do you want another copy (y or n)?
3410 GET A$:IF A$="" OR (A$<>"y" AND A$<>"n") THEN 3410
3420 IF A$="y" THEN 3100
3430 GOTO 150
```

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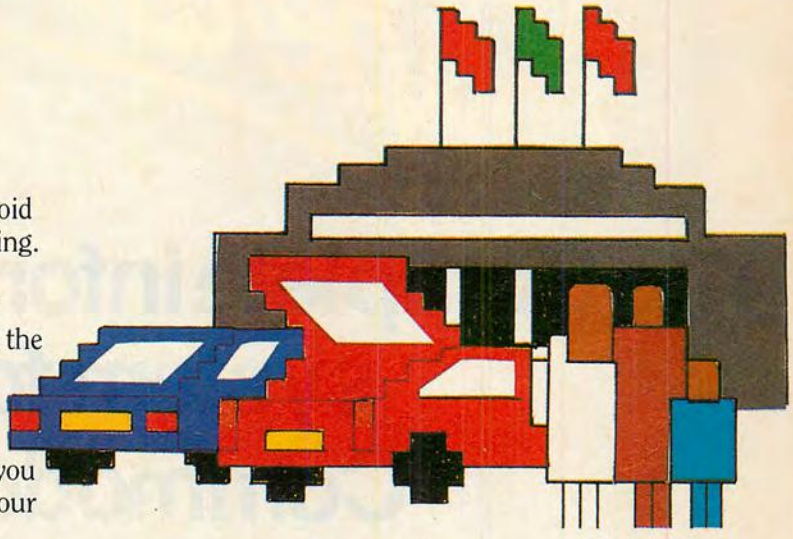

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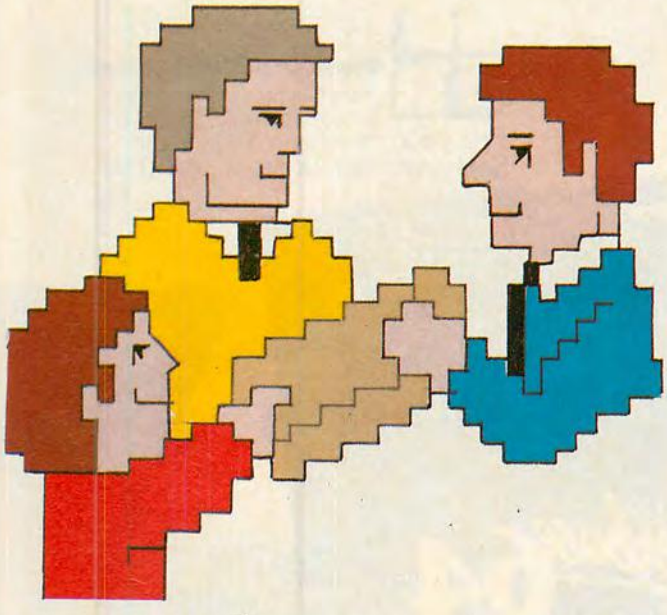

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RML typewriter

THE PROGRAM Type was designed by Ron Bulmer of Whitehaven Grammar School to enable a Research Machines 380-Z linked to an Epson MX-80 F/T Mk III printer to be used as an electronic typewriter. Many schools in Britain now possess a Research Machines 380-Z, one of the first computers recommended by the Department of Education and Science. It has some impressive features, notably its disc drives, the ability to run CP/M and its high-resolution graphics. It also has quite an advanced Basic, and the potential to run other high-level languages.

At Whitehaven Grammar School, we decided to link it to an Epson MX-80 FT Mk III printer. This printer has some excellent facilities: we were impressed by its ability to produce emphasised or double-struck characters in both normal and double-width mode. Even more interesting was its condensed mode, which produced a typeface which compares favourably in elegance and legiblility with many "letter-quality" printers.

The condensed mode seemed ideally suitable for general-purpose text for such routine school purposes as student records, exam papers, form lists and the like. It also offered possibilities, since it reproduced clearly on a Xerox or an offset copier, for the production of a school magazine or news sheet. The emphasised mode seemed perfect for titles and headings.

Ideally, of course, a commercial word processor would be used. Packages such as WordStar are breathtakingly comprehensive in the facilities that they offer, but they do have some drawbacks. As well as the expense of the software itself they need a fair amount of operator experience for proper use, and since they are written in machine code, they cannot easily be modified for a specific job.

I wrote Type as an inexpensive and easy-to-use alternative to a full-blown word processor. Type had to make use of the Epson printer's facilities and meet the following criteria:

- user-friendliness, to make it easy for non-experts to run,
- standard text in condensed characters,
- a choice of line widths from 10 to 110 characters, with 100 as standard line width,
- automatic line feed at a word space,
- both normal and expanded characters in double-printed form for titles and headings, and
- automatic centering of titles and headings.

Line justification is not included; I regard computer justification as an abomination. All the specifications are met by Type, and inexperienced operators have used the program after only a few minutes explanation.

If you put Type on the same disc as CP/M and Basic, then after booting the system, typing

Basic Type

will load and run the program. It first asks whether you require the standard line length of 100 characters, or some other length. The standard 100 characters was chosen as being most suitable for the ubiquitous A4 sheet. About 75 to 80 characters is suitable for A5.

You are then ready to type in your text. Most of the keyboard keys function in the normal way, and those keys such as Shift, Caps Lock and Delt perform normally. A standard-length line occupies about 2½ screen lines, and deleting is possible over the wrap-around of lines on screen. The Return key is only used to terminate short lines, such as end-of-paragraph lines. Normal-length lines are terminated automatically. This, of course, is what makes even the simplest word processor so much nicer to use than an ordinary typewriter. There are no opening quotes on the 380-Z keyboard so the reversed vertical line key, shifted, at the top right-hand side of the keyboard, is used instead. It may look a trifle strange on screen, but it prints quite well.

As each line is completed, it is automatically transferred to the printer and printed out. Typing Return at the beginning of a line prints a blank line. When you have finished your text, pressing Esc takes you back into Basic.

A change of type is signalled to the printer by a coded prefix to the line. The codes used are the two punctuation characters: and! for normal and expanded bold characters respectively, and the character > to centre the line. For example:

!TITLE

prints "TITLE" in expanded characters

:HEADING

prints "HEADING" in bold characters

!>TITLE

prints "TITLE" in expanded characters, centred

:>HEADING

prints "HEADING" in bold characters, centred

>SUBHEADING

prints "SUBHEADING" in condensed characters, centred. There are fewer characters per printed line with normal or expanded characters, so the program limits input on lines prefixed by : or ! to the bold-letter equivalent of 100 condensed characters.

(continued on next page)

Type.

```
10 REM "TYPE" PROGRAM (C) RON BULMER 6.1.83
20 REM Produces narrow type output from an Epson MX80 F/T3 printer using the R.M.380Z computer
30 CLEAR 1000:PRINTER 3:PUT 31          :REM allocate string space; parallel feed; clear screen
40 CR$=CHR$(13):D$=CHR$(127):E$=CHR$(27):D2$=CHR$(8)+" "+CHR$(8):C5$=CHR$(15):C8$=CHR$(18)
50 ?:?:?TAB(11)"Check printer ON":?
60 ?"   Standard (100) line Length? (Y/N)";
70 G$=GET$(£0):?G$:IF G$="Y"OR G$="y"THEN LL=100:GOTO 100  :REM LL=line length
80 ?:?TAB(8)"Line length required"CR$;TAB(7);:INPUT"(between 10 and 110)";LL
90 ?:?:IF LL>110 OR LL<10 THEN 80       :REM reject input outside line length limits
100 ?:?TAB(12)"Ready for text":?:?
110 LPRINT C5$;                         :REM set printer for narrow characters
120 L1=0:A$=""                          :REM L1=flag for bold heading line, initially set at 0
130 G$=GET$(£0):IF G$=E$ THEN 370       :REM E$ (ESC key) exits from program
140 IF G$=D$ AND A$=""THEN 120          :REM idiot-proofs the DELT key (D$)
150 IF G$=CR$ THEN 240                  :REM CR$ (RETURN key) ends line & sends it to printer
160 IF G$=D$ THEN G$=D2$:A$=LEFT$(A$,LEN(A$)-1):IF A$=""THEN L1=0
170 IF A$="!"THEN L1=LL*0.285+1.5       :REM L1 sets maximum length of heading line
180 IF A$=":"THEN L1=LL*0.575+1.5       :REM     "     "       "          "     "
190 L=LEN(A$):IF L>LL-4 AND G$=" "OR L>LL-4 AND G$=" "THEN 240  :REM ends line after char. no.LL-4
200 IF L>L1 AND L1>0 THEN 130           :REM limits line length to L1 on bold headings
210 PRINT G$;:IF G$="¦"THEN G$=CHR$(96) :REM substitutes for leading inverted comma
220 IF G$<>D2$ THEN A$=A$+G$            :REM avoids adding DELT char. to line in memory
230 GOTO 130
240 IF L<>40 OR L<>80 THEN ?            :REM avoids blank line on screen after lines of 40 or 80
250 IF LEFT$(A$,1)="!"THEN 320          :REM selects typeface of heading
260 IF LEFT$(A$,1)=":"THEN 300          :REM    "       "    "    "
270 IF LEFT$(A$,1)=">"THEN 290          :REM flags centred heading
280 LPRINT A$;CR$:GOTO 120              :REM prints ordinary lines
290 LPRINT SPC((LL+1-L)/2);MID$(A$,2);CR$:GOTO 120  :REM prints centred ordinary lines
300 IF MID$(A$,2,1)=">"THEN C=1:LPRINT SPC((LL-(L-2)*1.74)/2+.5);
310 LPRINT C8$;:GOTO 340                :REM last 2 lines deal with bold centred headings
320 IF MID$(A$,2,1)=">"THEN C=1:LPRINT SPC((LL-(L-2)*3.48)/2+.5);
330 LPRINT C8$;CHR$(14);                :REM last 2 lines deal with expanded centred headings
340 LPRINT E$;"E";:IF C=1 THEN LPRINT MID$(A$,3);:C=0:GOTO 360  :REM ESC"E" sets bold type
350 LPRINT MID$(A$,2);                  :REM this omits the prefix code
360 LPRINT CR$:LPRINT E$;"F";:GOTO 110  :REM ESC"F" switches off bold type
370 ?:LPRINT C8$;:END                   :REM switches off narrow characters on printer
```

(continued from previous page)

The program will work just as well with Rem statements omitted. The Clear statement in line 30 allocates string space in memory. This program does not use much memory — only enough for a single line of text, in fact — so a smaller figure than that given would suffice. Printer 3 indicates the type of printer interface; in our case it is a Centronics-type parallel feed.

Line 40 gives some of the regularly used commands more compact names. For example, CR$ is Carriage Return, D$ is the standard Delete, and E$ is the Escape code. D2$ is an alternative form of Delete, with the advantage of allowing "round-the-corner" deletion of screen lines — something that the 380-Z Basic editor lacks. C5$ and C8$ open and close the printer's Narrow Type mode.

Variable L1 in line 120 is the title-line flag. It is initially set at 0, but reset to the appropriate line length whenever : or ! are input as a line prefix. The resetting is done at lines 170 and 180. A$ is the input line of text, initially a null string.

Line 160 changes the standard Delete to D2$, allowing screen wrap-around deletion. Line 240 ensures that unnecessary Carriage Returns after a line of exactly 40 or exactly 80 characters are avoided.

Banner

BANNER is a short and simple program for the RML 380-Z written by Mark Callaway of Alnwick, Northumberland. It uses the advanced features of Basic SG2 to print banners on a printer. The program magnifies each letter in your message to 80 characters high and dumps it on the printer. To improve the look of the output, Banner strips the blank columns off the sides of each letter and separates each letter with a fixed number of spaces.

Many programs for printing magnified characters need hundreds of binary numbers to specify the shape of each character. Most micros have this data in the character-generator ROM but it is often placed inaccessibly on the VDU board. Research Machines. Basic SG2 has a command which prints magnified characters on the high-resolution graphics board. By examining these characters you can find the elusive codes defining the shape of each character. Once you have done this, printing is simple.

Owners of micros such as the BBC, which do not have separate graphics and text boards, can simply print letters on the screen and use the Point command to discover the shape of the characters.

Card is a more sophisticated program which works on the same principle as Banner. It lets you write a six-line message on the screen and dumps it on an 80-column printer. Like Banner, the program proportionally spaces the output: Card does this by drawing each letter on the screen and measuring the gap between it and the previous letter. The computer then blanks the letter and redraws it packed against the previous letter. The program then dumps the message on your printer by examining the high-resolution graphics board.

Banner.

```
10 REM Banner Printer by Mark Callaway
20 REM C 30/12/82
25 REM For RML 380Z with Hi-Res, BASICSG2 and a printer.
26 REM
30 INPUT"What is you message ";M$
40 INPUT"Width of letters ";W
50 INPUT"Gap between letters ";G
60 INPUT"Do you want me to print with a particular character (Y/N) ";R$
70 IFLEFT$(R$,1)="N"ORLEFT$(R$,1)="n"THENR$="n":GOTO90
80 INPUT"Which character shall I use ";C$
90 CALL"RESOLUTION",0,2            :REM enable Hi-Res graphics
100 CALL"CHARSIZE",20,20           :REM magnify characters 20 times
110 FORX=1 TO LEN(M$)
120   T$=MID$(M$,X,1)
130   CALL"STPLOT",0,0,VARADR(T$),2 :REM print T$ magnified 20 times
140   IFR$="n"THENC$=T$            :REM C$ is the character which goes on the printer
150   FORS=0TO7                    :REM S scans through the 8 columns which make up each character
160     IFT$=" "THEN190
170     FORZ=0TO7:CALL"RDOUT",5+S*20,5+Z*20,VARADR(I):IFI=2THEN190
180     NEXTZ:GOTO250              :REM checks to see if this column of the character is blank
190     FORU=1TOW                  :REM This loop sets the width of the printed letters
200       FORT=0TO7                :REM T scans up the columns which make up each character
210         CALL"RDOUT",5+(S*20),5+(T*20),VARADR(I)  :REM I is set to the intensity of pixel S,T
220         IFI=2THENFORV=1TO10:LPRINTC$;:NEXT ELSE LPRINT"          ";
230       NEXTT:LPRINT: REM LPRINT prints on the printer
240     NEXTU
250   NEXTS
260   CALL"STPLOT",0,0,VARADR(T$),0 :REM blank the magnified character
270   FORY=1TOG:LPRINT:NEXTY       :REM print gap between letters
280 NEXTX
```

Card.

```
10 REM Card by Mark Callaway
20 REM C 2 January 1983
30 REM Prints a 6 line message on a printer
40 REM Requires RML 380Z with Hi-Res and BASICSG2
50 REM
60 REM Instructions - type your message slowly and give the computer
70 REM time to pack the letters together.
80 REM Press return at the end of each line.
90 REM When you try to skip onto the seventh line,
100 REM the computer will ask you if you want your message printed.
110 REM
120 REM If your printer doesn't force a return/linefeed every 80
130 REM characters, add '575 LPRINT'.
140 I=0
150 GRAPH
160 TEXT
170 PRINT"Press '!' to escape"
180 CALL"RESOLUTION",0,2
190 CALL"PLOT",288,0,2:CALL"LINE",288,192
200 CALL"CHARSIZE",4,4
210 XC=0:YC=160
220 A$=GET$(20000)
230 IFASC(A$)=13THEN500
240 IFA$="!"THEN530
250 CALL"STPLOT",XC,YC,VARADR(A$),3
260 REMfindfirst non-blank column
270 OX=XC
280 IFA$=" "THEN330
290 FORS=0TO7
300 CALL"RDOUT",XC,YC+S*4,VARADR(I)
310 IFI<>0THEN330
320 NEXT:XC=XC+4:GOTO290
330 IN=XC-OX
340 REM IN = NUMBER OF BLANK COLUMNS
350 REM FIND NO OF BLANK COLUMNS AT END OF
    PREVIOUS CHARACTER
360 X=OX
370 IFOX=0THEN420
380 FORS=0TO7
390 CALL"RDOUT",X,YC+S*4,VARADR(I)
400 IFI<>0THEN420
410 NEXT:X=X-4:GOTO380
420 BACK=OX-X
430 REM BACK=NO BLANK COLUMNS AT END OF PREVIOUS CHAR
440 IFA$=" "THENCALL"FILL",OX-BA+4,YC,OX-BA+28,YC+28,1
450 CALL"STPLOT",OX,YC,VARADR(A$),0
460 CALL"STPLOT",OX-IN-BA+8,YC,VARADR(A$),3
470 XC=XC-IN-BACK
480 XC=XC+32
490 IFXC<288THEN220
500 YC=YC-32:XC=0
510 IFYC>=0THEN220
520 REM PRINT
530 INPUT"Shall I print this ";R$
540 IFLEFT$(R$,1)="n"ORLEFT$(R$,1)="N"THENRUN
550 INPUT"Which character shall I print with ";C$
555 REM Walters WM 2000 owners try 550 C$=CHR$(166)
560 FORY=0TO48
570 FORX=0TO79
580 CALL"RDOUT",X*4,192-Y*4,VARADR(I)
590 IFI=3THENLPRINTC$; ELSE LPRINT" ";
600 NEXT
605 IFY/8=INT(Y/8)THENLPRINT
610 NEXT
620 TEXT
```

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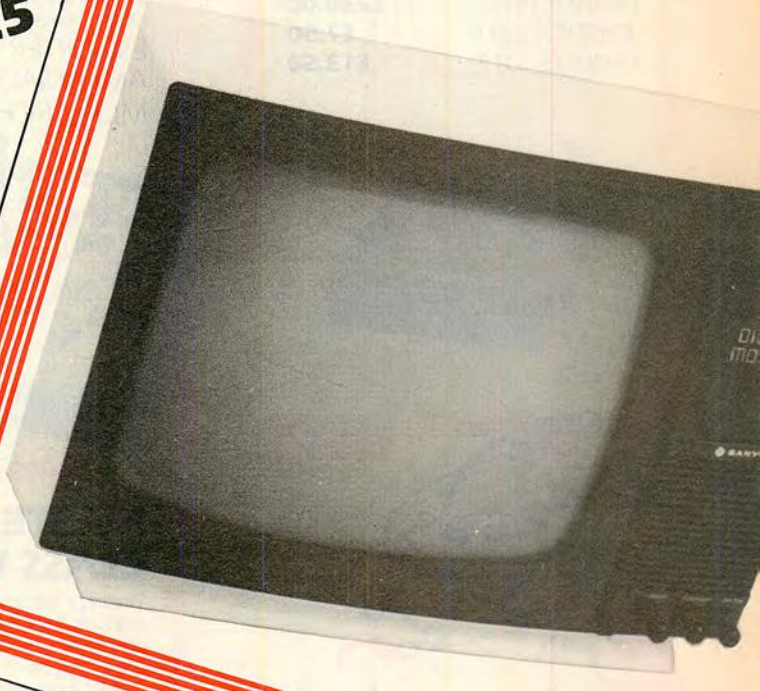

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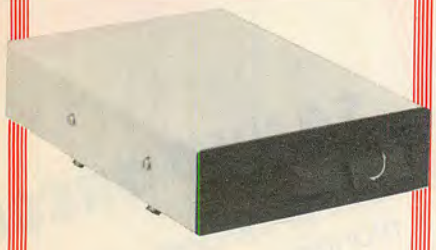

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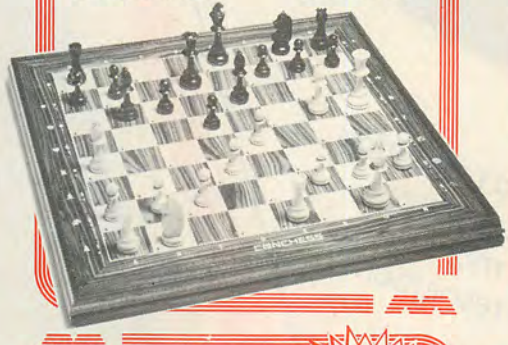

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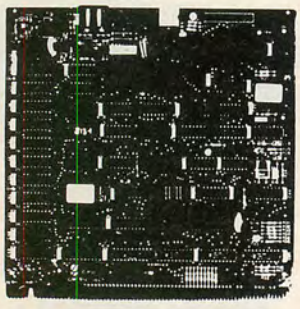
MicroValue 80-BUS MULTIBOARDS



GM813—CPU/64K RAM Board

* 4MHz Z80A C.P.U.
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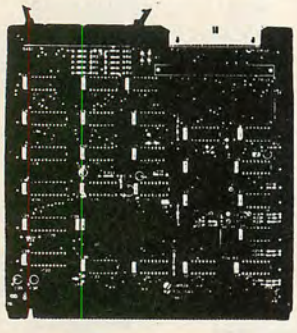

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* Up To 4 Mixed 5.25 & 8" Drives
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* Single & Double Density Operation
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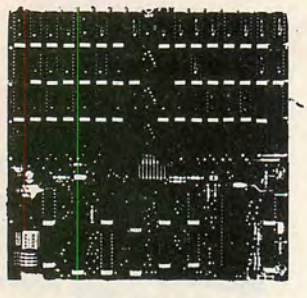

GM833—RAM-DISK Board

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* Port Mapped For Easy Interface Software
* Over 10 Times Faster Than a Floppy Disk

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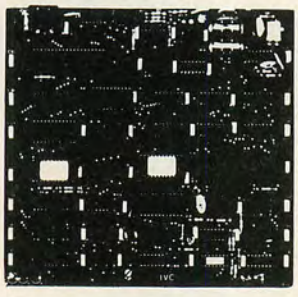
Please note: This board cannot be used as a conventional RAM board



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* 80 Characters×25 Line Display Format
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* Buffered Keyboard Input
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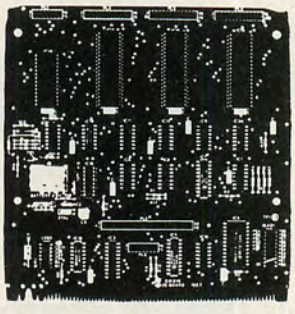

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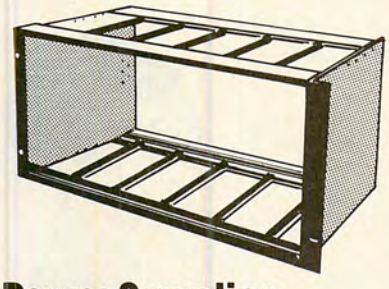

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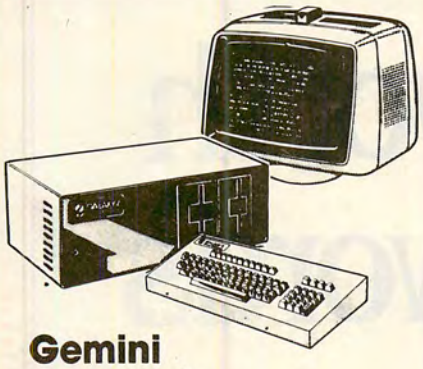

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"I would place the Galaxy at the top of my list" (Computing Today, April 1983)

* Twin Z80A Processors
* CP/M 2.2 Operating System
* 80x25 Video Display
* 64K Dynamic Ram
* Light Pen Interface
* Up to 1.6Mhz Disk Capacity
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The Gemini Multinet enables as many people as possible to have access to their own microcomputer with mass storage and printer facilities for the lowest possible cost. This is achieved by providing a central 'fileserver' fitted with a Winchester hard disk unit and printer interfaces, in conjunction with a method of interconnecting up to thirty-one workstations to the fileserver. The fileserver and each station are fitted with the Gemini GM836 network interface board. A Micropolis 800K floppy disk drive is incorporated in the fileserver providing backup for the hard disk.

GM910 Galaxy 4 Multinet 5.4 M/byte fileserver	£2600
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Both fileservers and workstations are supplied complete with VDU's; the operating software is suppliedwith the fileserver.

Phoenix P12 Monitor

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Mode 7 pictures

A LETTER from G Parris of Yeovil which starts "To produce pictures using Print and VDU statements in mode 7 is difficult and time consuming" must be a model of understatement. The accompanying program is a utility allowing full-colour graphics and text entry to a screen in mode 7.

The program is made no less daunting by the inclusion of an entire rhythm section sound track. What part sound effects have to play in a utility program I do not know, though I suspect that they are meant to indicate what control level the program is operating under at any moment.

After a quarter of an hour jotting down all the keyboard options on several scraps of paper, everything made a little more sense. There are 10 different screens which can be manipulated in memory, called, modified, saved, tanked on to disc or tape, and pulled back again.

Nothing valid on a mode 7 screen is missing from the options, and given the need to set up mixed text and graphics elements this must be the easiest way going. The stored screens can be called from user programs, bringing the option of pictures or picture backgrounds closer to home-designed games.

```
LIST
  10  REM*****************************
*
  20  REM      MODE 7 PICTURES      *****
*
  30  REM   FOR 0.1 AND 1.2 ROMS   *****
*
  40  REM       DISC OR TAPE        *****
*
  50  REM       BY G. PARRIS        *****
*
  60  REM         MAY 1983          *****
*
  70  REM*****************************
*
  80  MODE7:FORY=4TO5:VDU31,2,Y,134,14
1:PRINT"Would you like DISC or TAPE":NE
XT:FORY=7TO8:VDU31,0,Y,134,141:PRINT"st
orage of pictures (";CHR$129;"D";CHR$13
4;"or";CHR$129;"T";CHR$134;"):-";:NEXT
  90  *FX15,1
 100  TD$=GET$:IF TD$="T" THEN *T.
 110  IF TD$="D" THEN *DISC
 120  IF TD$<>"D" AND TD$<>"T" THEN GO
TO90
 130  FORY=10TO11:VDU31,3,Y,131,141:PR
INT"IS ";CHR$129;TD$;CHR$131;" CORRECT?
 (Y or N)";:NEXT
 140  *FX15,1
 150  A$=GET$:IF A$<>"Y" THEN RUN
 160
 170  ONERROR PROCstore(&6800,&7C00)
 180  *FX4,1
 190  SHAPE=255:C=151:CG=151:CT=135:V=
-15
 200  PROCindex
 210
 220  REPEAT:REM MENUS
 230  A$=INKEY$(0)
 240  IF A$="1" THEN PROCmainmenu:PROC
index
 250  IF A$="2" THEN PROCgraphicsmenu:
PROCindex
 260  IF A$="3" THEN PROCtextmenu:PROC
index
 270  IF A$="5" THEN UNTIL A$="5":GOTO
 2000
 280  UNTIL A$="4"
 290  CLS
 300  PROCstore(&7C00,&6800)
 310
 320  REM MAIN LOOP
 330  A=INKEY(40):REM PAUSE
 340  PROCcursor
 350  IF POS=39 THEN GOTO 330
 360  IF INKEY(-101) THEN PROCnewbackg
round:REM KEY B
 370  IF INKEY(-84) THEN PROCgraphic:R
EM KEY G
 380  IF INKEY(-36) THEN PROCtext:REM
KEY T
 390  IF INKEY(-52) THEN VDU159:REM KE
Y R
 400  IF INKEY(-71) THEN VDU152:REM KE
Y K
 410  IF INKEY(-35) THEN VDU154:REM KE
Y E
 420  IF INKEY(-54) THEN VDU153:REM KE
Y U
 430  IF INKEY(-98) THEN VDU12:REM KEY
 Z
 440  IF INKEY(-85) THEN VDU158:REM KE
Y H
 450  IF INKEY(-68) THEN VDU136:REM KE
Y F
 460  IF INKEY(-83) THEN VDU137:REM KE
Y C
 470  IF INKEY(-102) THEN PROCmemloads
ave:REM KEY M
 480  IF INKEY(-82) THEN PROCsave:REM
KEY S
 490  SOUND1,V,220,2:GOTO330
 500
 510  DEFPROCgraphic
 520  VDUC
 530  REPEAT
 540  *FX15,1
 550  A=GET:IF A>&30 AND A<&38 THEN SO
UND1,V,80,3:C=A+&60:CT=A+&50
 560  PROCnewshape
 570  IF CG<>C THEN VDU8,C,SHAPE,8:GOT
O590
 580  VDU SHAPE
 590  CG=C:*FX15,1
 600  UNTIL INKEY(-74) OR POS=39:REM R
ETURN OR SCREEN EDGE
 610  ENDPROC
 620
 630  DEFPROCcursor:REM USE CURSOR KEY
S
 640  IF INKEY(-58) AND VPOS>0 THEN VD
U11:ENDPROC
 650  IF INKEY(-42) AND VPOS<24 THEN V
DU10:ENDPROC
 660  IF INKEY(-26) AND POS>0 THEN VDU
8:ENDPROC
 670  IF INKEY(-122) AND POS<39 THEN V
DU9:ENDPROC
 680  ENDPROC
 690
 700  DEF PROCnewbackground
 710  A=GET:IF A<&30 OR A>&37 THEN END
PROC
 720  IF VPOS=24 THEN ENDPROC
 730  IF A=&30 THEN VDU156,156,10,8,8:
ENDPROC
 740  VDUA+&50,157,10,8,8:ENDPROC
 750
 760  DEF PROCnewshape
 770  REPEAT
 780  IF INKEY(-58) THEN SHAPE=SHAPE+1
 ELSE IF INKEY(-42) SHAPE=SHAPE-1:REM C
URSOR UP & DOWN KEYS
 790  IF SHAPE=159 SHAPE=255
 800  IF SHAPE=256 SHAPE=160
 810  IF SHAPE=192 SHAPE=224
 820  IF SHAPE=223 SHAPE=191
 830  IF CG=C THEN VDU SHAPE,8:GOTO850
 840  VDU 8,C,SHAPE,8:*FX15,1
 850  A=INKEY(20):SOUND0,V,100,1:UNTIL
 A=&87:REM COPY KEY
 860  ENDPROC
 870
 880  DEFPROCstore(X%,L%)
 890  FORI%=0 TO &400 STEP 4:I%!X%=I%!
L%:NEXT:ENDPROC
 900
 910  DEFPROCmemloadsave
 920  SOUND1,V,200,3:*FX15,1
 930  REPEAT:A$=GET$:IF A$="I" THEN PR
OCmsave
 940  IF A$="O" THEN PROCmload
 950  UNTIL A$=CHR$&0D:REM RETURN
 960  ENDPROC
 970
 980  DEFPROCmsave
 990  SOUND1,V,30,4:*FX15,1
1000  REPEAT:A$=GET$:UNTIL A$>="0" AND
 A$<="9"
1010  P=VAL(A$):PROCstore(&4000+(&400*
P),&7C00):SOUND1,V,50,4:ENDPROC
1020
1030  DEFPROCmload
1040  SOUND1,V,20,4:*FX15,1
1050  REPEAT:A$=GET$:UNTIL A$>="0" AND
 A$<="9"
1060  P=VAL(A$):PROCstore(&7C00,&4000+
(&400*P)):SOUND1,V,45,4:ENDPROC
1070
1080  DEFPROCtext
1090  VDU9:*FX15,1
1100  REPEAT:D$=GET$:UNTIL D$="D" OR D
$=" "
1110  IF D$="D" THEN SOUND1,V,160,4:PR
OCdoubleheight:ENDPROC
1120  SOUND1,V,100,4:*FX15,1
1130  A=GET:IF A>&30 AND A<&38 THEN SO
UND1,V,80,3:C=A+&60:CT=A+&50 ELSE IF A<
>&20 THEN GOTO 1130
1140  IF A>&20 THEN VDUCT
1150  REPEAT:*FX15,1
1160  F$=GET$:PRINTF$;:UNTIL INKEY(-97
) OR POS=39:REM TAB OR SCREEN EDGE
1170  ENDPROC
1180
1190  DEFPROCdoubleheight
1200  VDU141,10,8,141,11:*FX15,1
1210  A=GET:IF A>&30 AND A<&38 THEN SO
UND1,V,80,3:C=A+&60:CT=A+&50 ELSE IF A<
>&20 THEN GOTO 1210
1220  IF A=&20 THEN VDU10 ELSE VDUCT,1
0,8
1230  *FX15,1
1240  A=GET:IF A>&30 AND A<&38 THEN SO
UND1,V,80,3:C=A+&60:CT=A+&50 ELSE IF A<
>&20 THEN GOTO 1240
1250  IF A=&20 THEN VDU11 ELSE VDUCT,1
1
1260  REPEAT:*FX15,1
1270  F$=GET$:PRINTF$;:VDU10,8:PRINTF$
;:VDU11
1280  UNTIL INKEY(-97) OR POS=39:ENDPR
OC:REM TAB OR SCREEN EDGE
1290
1300  DEFPROCindex
1310  D=141:H=130
1320  CLS:VDU31,5,2,H+1,D:PRINT"@@ MOD
E7 PICTURE INDEX @@":VDU31,5,3,H+1,D:PR
INT"@@ MODE7 PICTURE INDEX @@"
1330 VDU31,6,4,H+3:PRINTSTRING$(25,"_"
)
1340  VDU31,0,6,H+4:PRINT"Would you li
ke:-"
1350  FORY=9 TO 10:VDU31,6,Y,H,D:PRINT
"< 1 >  MAIN MENU":NEXT
1360  FORY=11 TO 12:VDU31,6,Y,H,D:PRIN
T"< 2 >  GRAPHICS MENU":NEXT
1370  FORY=13 TO 14:VDU31,6,Y,H,D:PRIN
T"< 3 >  TEXT MENU":NEXT
1380  FORY=15 TO 16:VDU31,6,Y,H,D:PRIN
T"< 4 >  COMPOSE PICTURE":NEXT
1390  FORY=17 TO 18:VDU31,6,Y,H,D:PRIN
T"< 5 >  EXIT PROGRAM":NEXT
1400  FORY=21 TO 22:VDU31,6,Y,H+5,D:PR
INT"ENTER A NUMBER 1 TO 5":NEXT:ENDPROC
1410
1420  DEFPROCmainmenu
1430  H=131:CLS:FORX=0 TO 2 :VDU31,11,
X,H:PRINT"**************":NEXT
1440  VDU31,11,1,H,42,H+4:PRINT"MAIN
MENU";:VDUH,42
1450  VDU31,0,4,H:PRINT"< Z >  Clear S
creen"
1460  VDU31,0,5,H:PRINT"< B >  Plus  <
1 TO 7 & 0 >"
1470  VDU31,14,6,H:PRINT"Sets Backgrou
nd Colour"
1480  VDU31,4,8,H+3:PRINT">>>>>> SCREE
N TO MEMORY <<<<<<"
1490  VDU31,0,10,H:PRINT"< M >  Goes t
o Save Mode"
1500  VDU31,1,11,H:PRINT"< I >  Input
        < O >  Output"
1510  VDU31,0,12,H:PRINT"KEYS NO.  < 1
TO 0 >  Pictures 1 TO 10"
1520  VDU31,3,13,H:PRINT"< I >  &  < O
```

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```
 >   Used to Repeat"
 1530  VDU31,3,13,H,60,H-2:PRINT"RETURN
";:VDUH:PRINT">  Back to Main Program"
 1540  VDU31,3,15,H+3:PRINT">>>>>> MEMO
RY TO CASSETTE <<<<<<"
 1550  VDU31,0,17,H:PRINT"< S >  and th
en "
 1560  VDU31,4,18,H:PRINT" KEYS  NO. <
1 TO 0 >"
 1570  VDU31,14,19,H:PRINT"Saves Pictur
es 1 TO 10"
 1580  VDU31,5,21,H+4:PRINT"PRESS";:VDU
H-2:PRINT" RETURN ";:VDUH+4:PRINT" FOR
 INDEX ";:REPEAT:A=GET:UNTIL A=&0D
 1590  ENDPROC
 1600
 1610  DEFPROCgraphicsmenu
 1620  H=130:CLS:FORX=0 TO 2:VDU31,10,X
,H:PRINT"£££££££££££££££££":NEXT
 1630  VDU31,10,1,H,35,H+5:PRINT"GRAPHI
CS  MENU";:VDUH,35
 1640  VDU31,6,4,H:PRINT"Available in";
:VDUH+1:PRINT"Main Program:-"
 1650  VDU31,1,6,H:PRINT"< E >  Expande
d    < U >  Unexpanded"
 1660  VDU31,1,7,H:PRINT"< H >  Hold
     < R >  Release"
 1670  VDU31,11,8,H:PRINT"< K >    Conc
eal"
 1680  VDU31,0,10,H+2,157,H+3:PRINT" <
> < > < > < > * < > < > < > < > < >"
 1690  VDU31,3,12,H:PRINT"Press  < G >
 for Graphics Mode"
 1700  VDU31,5,14,H:PRINT"< 1 TO 7 >  G
raphics Colour"
 1710  VDU31,1,16,H:PRINT"Cursor Keys"
 1720  VDU31,4,17,H:PRINT"< UP >  &  <
DOWN >  Change Shape"
 1730  VDU31,5,19,H:PRINT"< COPY >  Rep
eats the Shape"
 1740  VDU31,1,21,H,60,H-1:PRINT"RETURN
";CHR$H;CHR$62;" Then  <";:VDUH-1:PRINT
"COPY";CHR$H;CHR$62
 1750  VDU31,12,22,H:PRINT"Goes back to
";CHR$(H+1);"Main Program"
 1760  VDU31,6,24,H+5:PRINT"PRESS ";CHR
$(H-1);"RETURN";CHR$(H+5);" FOR  INDEX
";:REPEAT:A=GET:UNTIL A=&0D
 1770  ENDPROC
 1780
 1790  DEFPROCtextmenu
 1800  H=134:J=151:CLS:FORX=0 TO 2:VDU3
1,11,X,H:PRINTSTRING$(14,"+"):NEXT
 1810  VDU31,11,1,H,43,H+1:PRINT"TEXT
MENU";CHR$H"+"
 1820  VDU31,4,4,H:PRINT"Available in";
CHR$131;"Main Program:-"
 1830  VDU31,1,6,H:PRINT"< F >  Start
  < C >  Stop Flashing"
 1840  VDU31,0,8,H-1,157,H-3:PRINTSTRIN
G$(17," ")
 1850  VDU31,5,10,H:PRINT"Press  < T >
for Text Mode";
 1860  VDU31,18,11,J,255
 1870  VDU31,9,12,J:PRINTCHR$183;STRING
$(17,CHR$163);CHR$235
 1880  VDU31,2,13,H:PRINT"< D >  Double
 ";:VDUJ,62,H:PRINT"< SPC.BAR > Single
"
 1890  VDU31,18,14,J,62
 1900  VDU31,0,15,H:PRINT"<1 TO 7> Top
Col.";:VDUJ,62,H:PRINT" <1 TO 7>"
 1910  VDU31,0,16,H:PRINT"<1 TO 7> Bot.
Col.";:VDUJ,62,H:PRINTSPC11"Colour"
 1920  VDU31,18,17,J,62
 1930  VDU31,5,18,H:PRINT"Type Text   "
;:VDUJ,62,H:PRINT"   Type Text"
 1940  VDU31,18,19,J,62
 1950  VDU31,0,20,H:PRINT"<";CHR$(H-5)"
TAB";CHR$H">  Back to ";:VDUJ,62,H:PRIN
T"<";CHR$(H-5)"TAB";CHR$H">  Back to"
 1960  VDU31,3,21,H-3:PRINT"Main Progra
m  ";:VDUJ,62,H-3:PRINT"   Main Program
"
 1970  VDU31,6,23,H+1:PRINT"PRESS ";:VD
UH-5:PRINT"RETURN ";:VDUH+1:PRINT"FOR
INDEX ";:REPEAT:A=GET:UNTIL A=&0D
 1980  ENDPROC
 1990
 2000  MODE7:FORY=4TO5:VDU31,4,Y,134,14
1:PRINT"YOU ARE OUT OF THE PROGRAM":NEX
T:*FX4,0
 2010  END
 2020
 2030  DEFPROCsave
 2040  PROCstore(&6800,&7C00):CLS
 2050  SA$=GET$
 2060  IF SA$="1" THEN *SAVE"PIC.1" 440
0 47FF
 2070  IF SA$="2" THEN *SAVE"PIC.2" 480
0 4BFF
 2080  IF SA$="3" THEN *SAVE"PIC.3" 4C0
0 4FFF
 2090  IF SA$="4" THEN *SAVE"PIC.4" 500
0 53FF
 2100  IF SA$="5" THEN *SAVE"PIC.5" 540
0 57FF
 2110  IF SA$="6" THEN *SAVE"PIC.6" 580
0 5BFF
 2120  IF SA$="7" THEN *SAVE"PIC.7" 5C0
0 5FFF
 2130  IF SA$="8" THEN *SAVE"PIC.8" 600
0  67FF
 2140  IF SA$="9" THEN *SAVE"PIC.9" 640
0 67FF
 2150  IF SA$="10" THEN *SAVE"PIC.10" 4
000 43FF
 2160  PROCstore(&7C00,&6800)
 2170  ENDPROC
>
```

Sea Battle

If you can't sit back and tap the force, you will last 10 seconds in this game by Chris Carr of Evesham, which is based on a once-popular arcade game. I find it disconcerting that sheer effort should be so unavailing, but the ability to react without thinking has always been recognised in some circles as a talent worth cultivating. I am sure that Athos and friends would have cottoned on to Sea-Battle in an instant and run up scores beyond the dreams of sedents. For myself, I didn't notice the existence of a score facility until I went back to Mr Carr's letter.

The submarines, frigate, aeroplanes and helicopters are well executed if phrenetic. The controls are standard left- and right-hand A, Z, . and /, for missile, depth-charge, left and right. There are two speed options, neither of which were much help though I did see a difference, and suitable

(continued on page 174)

```
   10 REM*** SEA-BATTLE ***
   20 REM*** Copyright  ***
   30 REM*** C.Carr 82  ***
   40 H%=0
   50 ONERRORRUN
   60 MODE1
   70 REM*** TITLES ***
   80 CLS
   90 PRINT'''TAB(10)"*** SEA-BATTLE *
**"
  100 PRINT''"     Your task is to dest
roy the waves"'"of attacking submarines
,fighter "'"aircraft and helicopters,us
ing the"'"following controls:"
  110 PRINT''SPC8". --- Steer left"''SP
C8"/ --- Steer right"''SPC8"A --- Fire
a missile"''SPC8"Z --- Drop a depth cha
rge"
  120 PRINT''SPC5"Level ? (0-Hard,1-Eas
y)":A$=GET$
  130 L%=VALA$:IFL%=1THENW%=200 ELSE W%
=0:IFL%<>1THENL%=0
  140 PRINT'''"   *** Hit any key to co
ntinue ***"
  150 A$=GET$:CLS
  160 REM*** PROG START ***
  170 PROCDEFINE
  180 FORJ=0TO39:PRINTTAB(J,16)CHR$230:
NEXT
  190 PRINTTAB(0,0)"**SEA-BATTLE**   Sc
ore=0    Hi-Score=";H%
  200 COLOUR3:PRINTTAB(SPH%,16)SHIP$
  210 COLOUR2:PRINTTAB(SBH%,SBV%)SUB$
  220 PRINTTAB(PLH%,PLV%)PLANE$
  230 COLOUR1:PRINTTAB(HEH%,HEV%)HE$
  240 FORJ%=0TOW%:NEXT
  250 SOUND1,2,130,1
  260 SBH%=SBH%+1:PLH%=PLH%-1:HEH%=HEH%
+1
  270 IFSBH%>=34THENPRINTTAB(SBH%,SBV%)
"     ":SBH%=0:SBV%=RND(5)*2+18
  280 IFHEH%>=36THENPRINTTAB(HEH%,HEV%)
"    ":HEH%=0:REPEAT:HEV%=RND(6)*2+1:UNT
ILHEV%<>PLV%
  290 IFPLH%<=0THENPRINTTAB(PLH%,PLV%)"
    ":PLH%=35:REPEAT:PLV%=RND(6)*2+1:U
NTILHEV%<>PLV%
  300 IFPF%=0 AND (ABS(PLH%-SPH%)<4 OR
RND(1)>.95)THENPF%=1:PBH%=PLH%:PBV%=PLV
%+1
  310 IFHF%=0 AND (ABS(SPH%-HEH%+3)<2 O
R RND(1)>.95)THENHF%=1:HBH%=HEH%:HBV%=H
EV%+1
  320 IFSF%=0 AND (ABS(SPH%-SBH%+4)<2 O
R RND(1)>.95)THENSF%=1:SBBH%=SBH%:SBBV%
=SBV%-1
  330 IFPF%=1 THENPROCPLANEBOMB
  340 IFHF%=1 THENPROCHEBOMB
  350 IFSF%=1 THENPROCSUBBOMB
  360 IFINKEY(-104)=-1 AND SPH%>0 THEN
SPH%=SPH%-1
  370 IFINKEY(-105)=-1 AND SPH%<34 THEN
SPH%=SPH%+1
  380 IFINKEY(-66)=-1 AND MF%=0 THENMF%
=1:MH%=SPH%+1:MV%=15
  390 IFINKEY(-98)=-1 AND DF%=0 THENDF%
=1:DH%=SPH%+1:DV%=17
  400 IFMF%=1THENPROCMISSILE
  410 IFDF%=1THENPROCDCHARGE
  420 GOTO200
  430 REM*** END ***
  440 COLOUR3
  450 *FX15,0
  460 FORJ%=0TO2000:NEXTJ%:CLS:PRINTTAB
(6,10)"Your ship has been sunk"''SPC6"Y
ou scored ";S%;" points"''SPC6"on level
 ";L%
  470 PRINT''SPC6"Another go ? ":A$=GET
$:IFA$="N"THENPRINTUSR56345
  480 IFS%>H% THEN H%=S%
  490 CLEAR:GOTO70
  500 REM*** SUBROUTINES ***
  510 DEFPROCDEFINE
  520 VDU23,230,0,0,0,0,4,10,50,193
  530 VDU23,231,0,0,0,0,255,255,127,0
  540 VDU23,232,1,15,127,255,255,255,25
5,0
  550 VDU23,233,128,128,192,240,255,255
,255,0
  560 VDU23,234,0,0,0,255,254,252,248,0
  570 SHIP$=CHR$230+CHR$231+CHR$232+CHR
$233+CHR$234+CHR$230
  580 VDU23,235,0,0,0,7,127,255,127,0
  590 VDU23,236,3,3,7,255,255,255,255,0
  600 VDU23,237,240,240,240,255,255,255
,255,0
  610 VDU23,238,0,0,0,240,254,255,254,0
  620 SUB$=" "+CHR$235+CHR$236+CHR$237+
CHR$238+" "
  630 VDU23,239,0,0,0,0,15,255,0,0
  640 VDU23,240,0,0,0,0,255,255,127,0
  650 VDU23,241,0,14,30,62,254,255,254,
0
  660 PLANE$=CHR$239+CHR$240+CHR$241+"
"
  670 VDU23,242,1,0,0,255,15,0,0,0
  680 VDU23,243,255,16,30,255,255,126,6
0,0
  690 HE$=" "+CHR$242+CHR$243
  700 VDU23,247,198,238,124,124,56,56,5
6,16
  710 VDU23,244,60,60,60,24,60,126,126,
60
  720 VDU23,245,8,28,28,28,62,62,119,99
  730 VDU23,246,129,66,36,0,0,36,66,129
  735 ENVELOPE1,131,1,-1,1,1,1,1,121,-1
2,-6,-4,120,120
  736 ENVELOPE2,129,0,0,0,0,0,0,100,-20
,-1,-4,100,0
  740 SPH%=18:HEH%=0:SBH%=0:PLH%=35
  750 HEV%=RND(6)*2+1
  760 PLV%=RND(6)*2+1:IFPLV%=HEV%THEN76
0
  770 SBV%=RND(5)*2+18
  780 PF%=0:HF%=0:SF%=0:MF%=0:DF%=0
  790 MH%=0:MV%=0:DH%=0:DV%=0
  800 PBH%=0:SBBH%=0:HBH%=0:PBV%=0:SBBV
%=0:HBV%=0
  810 S%=0
  820 ENDPROC
  830 DEFPROCPLANEBOMB
  840 COLOUR3
  850 PRINTTAB(PBH%,PBV%-1)" ":IFPBV%<>
16THEN PRINTTAB(PBH%,PBV%)CHR$244:PBV%=
PBV%+1:ENDPROC
  860 IF?(HIMEM+(PBV%*640)+PBH%*16)+7)
<>204 THENPROCEXPLOSION(PBH%,PBV%):PROC
SINK:GOTO430
  870 PF%=0
  880 ENDPROC
  890 DEFPROCHEBOMB
  900 COLOUR2
```

(listing continued on page 174)

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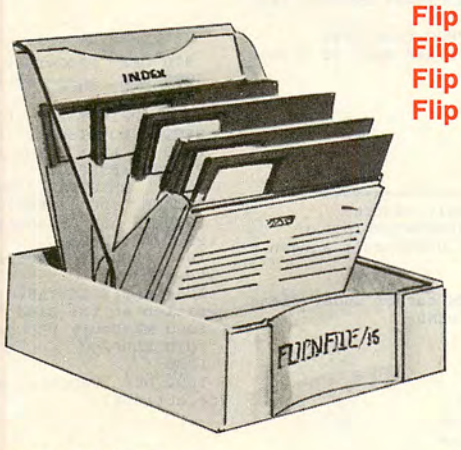

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(listing continued from page 172)

```
  910 PRINTTAB(HBH%,HBV%-1)" ":IFHBV%<>
16THEN PRINTTAB(HBH%,HBV%)CHR$247:HBV%=
HBV%+1:ENDPROC
  920 IF?((HIMEM+(HBV%*640)+HBH%*16)+7)
<>204 THENPROCEXPLOSION(HBH%,HBV%):PROC
SINK:GOTO430
  930 HF%=0
  940 ENDPROC
  950 DEFPROCSUBBOMB
  960 COLOUR3
  970 PRINTTAB(SBBH%,SBBV%+1)" ":IFSBBV
%<>16THEN PRINTTAB(SBBH%,SBBV%)CHR$245:
SBBV%=SBBV%-1:ENDPROC
  980 IF?((HIMEM+(SBBV%*640)+SBBH%*16)+
7)<>204 THENPROCEXPLOSION(SBBH%,SBBV%):
PROCSINK:GOTO430
  990 SF%=0
 1000 ENDPROC
 1010 DEFPROCMISSILE
 1020 COLOUR3
 1030 PRINTTAB(MH%,MV%+1)" "
 1040 X%=?((HIMEM+(MV%*640)+MH%*16)+5)
 1050 IFX%=0THEN1130
 1060 PROCEXPLOSION(MH%,MV%)
 1070 IFX%=119THEN PF%=0:S%=S%+5:GOTO11
20
 1080 IFX%=51THEN HF%=0:S%=S%+5:GOTO112
0
 1090 IFMV%=PLV% THENPLH%=35:REPEAT:PLV
%=RND(6)*2+1:UNTIL PLV%<>HEV%:GOTO1110
 1100 HEH%=0:REPEAT:HEV%=RND(6)*2+1:UNT
IL PLV%<>HEV%
 1110 S%=S%+10
 1120 MF%=0:PRINTTAB(23,0);S%:ENDPROC
 1130 IFMV%<=1THENMF%=0:PRINTTAB(MH%,MV
%+1)" ":ENDPROC
 1140 PRINTTAB(MH%,MV%)CHR$245
 1150 MV%=MV%-1
 1160 ENDPROC
 1170 DEFPROCDCHARGE
 1180 COLOUR3
 1190 PRINTTAB(DH%,DV%-1)" "
 1200 X%=?((HIMEM+(DV%*640)+DH%*16)+4):
IFX%=0 THEN1240
 1210 PROCEXPLOSION(DH%,DV%):DF%=0
 1220 IFX%=51 THENSF%=0:S%=S%+5:PRINTTA
B(23,0);S%:GOTO1250
 1230 SBH%=0:SBV%=RND(5)*2+18:S%=S%+10:
PRINTTAB(23,0);S%:GOTO1250
 1240 PRINTTAB(DH%,DV%)CHR$244:DV%=DV%+
1
 1250 IFDV%>=31THENDF%=0:PRINTTAB(DH%,D
V%-1)" ":ENDPROC
 1260 ENDPROC
 1270 DEFPROCEXPLOSION(H%,V%)
 1280 COLOUR3
 1290 PRINTTAB(H%,V%)CHR$246
 1300 SOUND0,1,5,1
 1340 PRINTTAB(H%-3,V%)"         "
 1350 ENDPROC
 1360 DEFPROCSINK
 1370 COLOUR3
 1380 FORJ%=0TO39:PRINTTAB(J%,16)CHR$23
0:NEXT
 1390 FORJ%=17TO29
 1400 PRINTTAB(SPH%,J%)MID$(SHIP$,2,4)
 1410 FORK%=1TO400:NEXTK%
 1420 PRINTTAB(SPH%,J%)"       "
 1430 NEXTJ%
 1440 PRINTTAB(SPH%,J%)MID$(SHIP$,2,4)
 1450 FORJ=-15TO0:SOUND0,J,6,1:NEXT
 1460 ENDPROC
>
```

(continued from page 172)

sound prompts to tune in on. At a more hypothetical level, obliteration of a submarine, aeroplane or helicopter scores 10, of a bomb or missile 5.

Disc dump

Following his memory-dump utility of May, Ian Kerr of Derby has submitted an equivalent function utility for disc management. As with the memory utility, careless use is frequently irreversible and destructive. On the other hand it allows quick answers to unpleasant problems.

The operating instructions are in-built and the utility handles without frustrations or uncertainties. It is not a tool to use for real if you do not know what a track, sector or dictionary is, though with perseverence and a strict avoidance of the Edit facility you might use it as a way of finding out.

Disc dump.

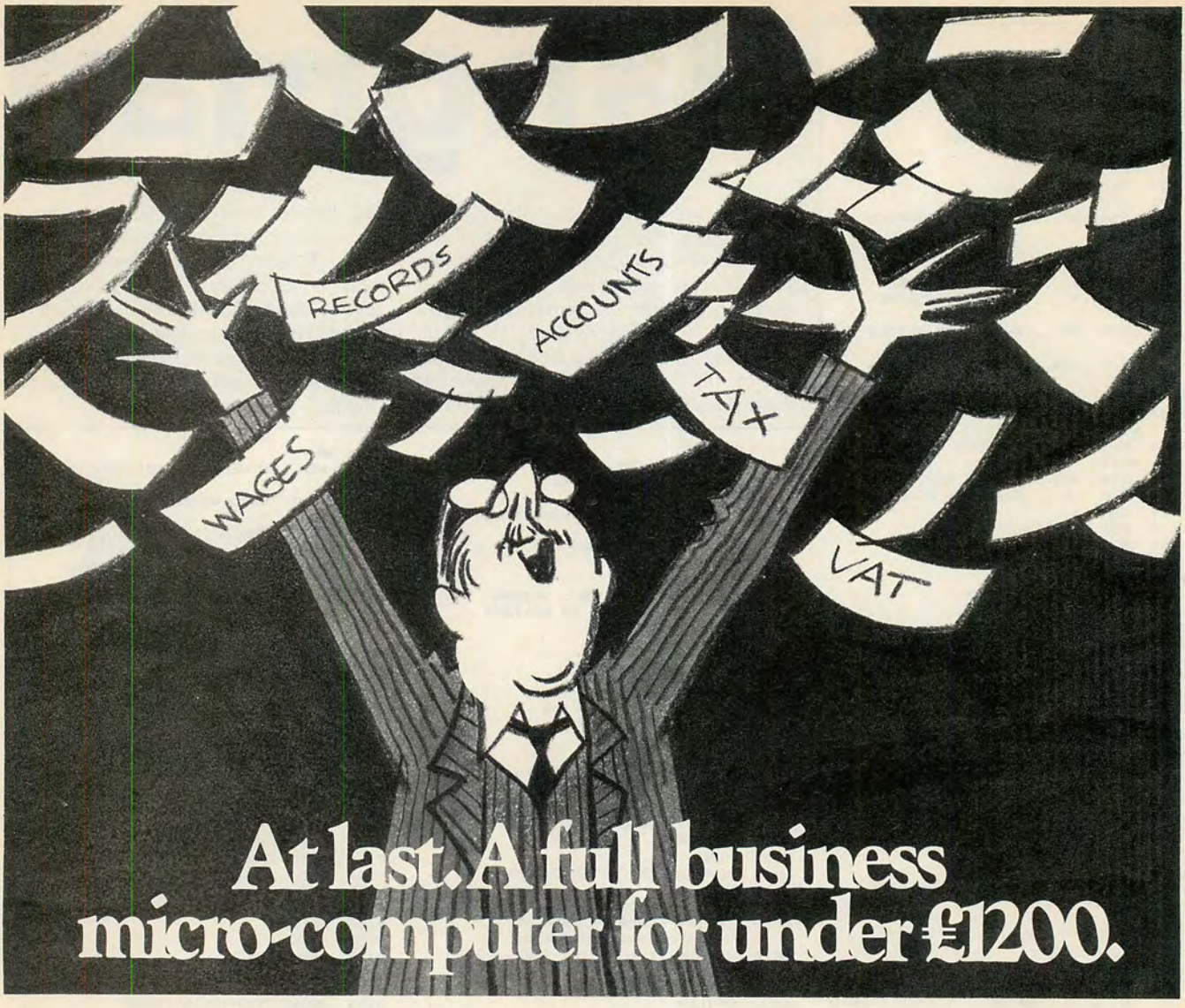
```
   10 REM  *** DDUMP ***
   20 REM  *VERSION 1.3*
   30 ON ERROR GOTO390
   40 *FX4,1
   50 MODE7:DIM I% 15,Dbuf% 256
   60 PRINTTAB(12,5)CHR$141;CHR$134"DDU
MP"
   70 PRINTTAB(12,6)CHR$141;CHR$134"DDU
MP"
   80 PRINTTAB(8,8)"(BEEB Disc Utility)
"
   90 PRINTTAB(3,15)"Input the starting
 location":INPUT"   as <track>,<sector>
:"TR%,SC%
  100 IF TR%<0 OR TR%>39 OR SC%<0 OR SC
%>9 THEN VDU12,7:GOTO90
  110 VDU12
  120 PRINTTAB(14);CHR$141;"DDUMP":PRIN
TTAB(14);CHR$141;"DDUMP"
  130 PRINTCHR$132;"ADDR";CHR$131;TAB(1
5);"DATA";CHR$129;TAB(32);"ALPHA"
  140 VDU28,0,24,39,5:REM text area bel
ow Header
  150 M%=Dbuf%:REM point to Disc buffer
  160 PROCdisc_access(TR%,SC%,0):PROCdm
p
  170
  180 REM  ======MAIN PROGRAM======
  190 REPEAT
  200 K=ASC(GET$):IFK=2 VDU2 ELSE IF K=
3 VDU3
  210 IFK<>139 THEN 260
  220 IF M%=Dbuf% THEN 230 ELSE M%=M%-1
28:PROCdmp:GOTO200
  230 SC%=SC%-1:IF SC%<0 THEN TR%=TR%-1
:SC%=9
  240 IF TR%<0 CLS:PRINTTAB(12,10)"star
t of disc":TR%=0:SC%=0:VDU30:GOTO200
  250 PROCdisc_access(TR%,SC%,0):PROCdm
p
  260 IFK<>138 THEN 310
  270 IF M%=Dbuf%+128 THEN 280 ELSE M%=
M%+128:PROCdmp:GOTO200
  280  SC%=SC%+1:IF SC%>9 THEN TR%=TR%+
1:SC%=0
  290 IF TR%>39 CLS:PRINTTAB(12,10)"end
 of disc":TR%=39:SC%=9:VDU30:GOTO200
  300 PROCdisc_access(TR%,SC%,0):M%=Dbu
f%:PROCdmp
  310 IFK=&4ATHENPROCnewloc:PROCdisc_ac
cess(TR%,SC%,0):PROCdmp
  320 IFK=&45THENPROCmemed:PROCdmp:PROC
write_disc
  330 IFK=&57THEN PROCwrite_disc
  340 IFFLG% GOTO400:REM exit if proble
ms with disc
  350 UNTIL0
  360
  370 REM  ======================
  380 REM  Escape exit routine
  390 IFERR<>17THENREPORT:PRINTERL
  400 VDU28,0,24,39,0:REM full screen t
ext
  410 *FX4,0
  420 VDU31,0,23:REM cursor under data
  430 PRINT"...Bye":END
  440
  450 DEF  PROCnewloc
  460 REM  ==========
  470
  480 PRINTTAB(5,18);
  490 INPUT"Location <tr>,<sct>:"TR%,SC
%
  500 IF TR%<0 OR TR%>39 OR SC%<0 OR SC
%>9 GOTO490
  510 CLS
  520 ENDPROC
  530
  540 DEF  PROCmemed
  550 REM  =========
  560
  570 CLS:PROCdmp:VDU7:PRINTTAB(12,18);
  580 PRINT"EDITING";:MEM%=M%:VDU31,6,0
  590 K$=GET$:K=ASC(K$):IFK=139THENIFVP
OS>0THENVDU11:MEM%=MEM%-8
  600 IFK=138THENIFVPOS<15THENVDU10:MEM
%=MEM%+8
  610 IFK=136THENIFPOS>6THENVDU8,8,8:ME
M%=MEM%-1
  620 IFK=137THENIFPOS<25THENVDU9,9,9:M
EM%=MEM%+1
  630 IF(K<&30)OR(K>&46)OR((K>&39)AND(K
<&41))THEN720
  640 PRINTK$;
  650  N$=GET$:N=ASC(N$):IF(N<&30)OR(N>
&46)OR((N>&39)AND(N<&41))THEN650
  660  PRINTN$;
  670 NV%=EVAL("&"+K$+N$)
  680 ?MEM%=NV%:MEM%=MEM%+1:VDU9
  690 IFPOS>28THENFORI=1TO24:VDU8:NEXT:
VDU10
  700 IFVPOS>15THEN730
  710 GOTO590
  720 IFK<>13THEN590
  730 CLS:ENDPROC
  740
  750 DEF  PROCdmp
  760 REM  =======
  770
  780 Mem%=M%-Dbuf%:REM set offset addr
ess to zero
  790 FORX%=0TO127STEP8
  800 AD%=M%+X%:ad%=(Mem%+X%)
  810 ALFA$="":PRINTCHR$132;~ad%;TAB(5)
;
  820 VDU131:FORNX%=0TO7:HVAL=?(AD%+NX%
):HEX$=CHR$(HVAL)
  830 IF(HEX$<" ")OR(HEX$>"~")THENHEX$=
"."
  840 ALFA$=ALFA$+HEX$:W$=STR$~(HVAL)
  850 IFLEN(W$)<2THENW$="0"+W$
  860 PRINTW$;" ";
  870 NEXT:PRINTCHR$129;ALFA$
  880 NEXT:PRINT
  890 *FX15,1
  900 REM print current disc location i
n Header
  910 IF FLG% ENDPROC:REM don't update
if fault
  920 VDU26:PRINTTAB(28,0)"      ";:VDU8
,8,8,8,8:PRINTTR%;":";SC%
  930 PRINTTAB(28,1)"      ";:VDU8,8,8,8
,8:PRINTTR%;":";SC%
  940 VDU28,0,24,39,5,13:REM restore te
xt area
  950 ENDPROC
  960
  970 DEF  PROCwrite_disc
  980 REM  ==============
  990
 1000  PRINTTAB(3,18)CHR$134"WRITE THIS
 SECTOR TO DISC ??":VDU7:A$=GET$
 1010 IF A$<>"Y"ANDA$<>"y" THEN VDU7,12
:PROCdmp:ENDPROC
 1020   PRINTTAB(3,18)CHR$136;CHR$129"
**  ARE  YOU  SURE???  **":A$=GET$
 1030 IF A$<>"Y"ANDA$<>"y" THEN VDU7,12
:PROCdmp:ENDPROC
 1040 PROCdisc_access(TR%,SC%,1):REM wr
ite sector
 1050 CLS:PRINTTAB(0,15)"  ***  Sector
written to the Disc ***":VDU30
 1060 M%=Dbuf%:PROCdmp
 1070 ENDPROC
 1080
 1090 DEF  PROCdisc_access(track%,secto
r%,action%)
 1100 REM  ==============
 1110 OSWORD%=&FFF1:?I%=0:*FX15,1
 1120 I%?1=Dbuf%MOD256
 1130 I%?2=Dbuf%DIV256
 1140 I%?3=0:I%?4=0
 1150 I%?5=3
 1160 IF action%=0 THEN I%?6=&53 ELSE I
%?6=&4B:REM &53 to read,&4B to write
 1170 I%?7=track%:I%?8=sector%
 1180 I%?9=&21:REM ie 256 bytes/sect fo
r 1 sect
 1190 X%=I%MOD256:Y%=I%DIV256:A%=&7F
 1200 CALL OSWORD%:REM read/write a sec
tor
 1210
 1220 REM check for disc access error
 1230 FLG%=I%?&A:IF FLG% THENPRINTTAB(5
,18)CHR$136;CHR$131"Disc error number "
;~FLG%;"..Hit a key":A=GET:CLS
 1240 ENDPROC
```

Hangman

GRAHAM WILSON of Clifton, Bristol offers a version of Hangman which may perhaps prove slightly less controversial than his security procedures, published in February's Apple Pie, correspondence on which is still being received. It has the advantage of not relying on an in-built list of possible words, and so long as you can capture some passer-by for 10 seconds now and then to input a problem you should have nothing to worry about.

Mr Wilson has an elegant coding solution to progressively displaying the gallows. Several readers have commented on the clarity and style of his code which, given the awfulness of Applesoft Basic for readability, is really a considerable compliment.

```
10  REM
15  REM  HANGMAN
20  REM
25  REM  28-3-83
30  REM
35  REM  GRAHAM B. WILSON
40  REM
999  REM
1000  REM  VARIABLES
1001  REM
1005  REM  DF....LEVEL OF DIFFICU
     LTY
1010  REM  I.....COUNTER
1015  REM  IP$...INPUT
1020  REM  L.....LENGTH OF WORD
1025  REM  PT....FAILURE DECREMEN
     T
1030  REM  TR....NUMBER OF TRIALS

1035  REM  WD$...WORD ELEMENTS IN
     PUT
1040  REM  WD$().WORD ELEMENTS
1045  REM  WE$...ELEMENT GUESSED
     WORD
1050  REM  WE$().GUESSED WORD ELE
     MENTS
1055  REM  WR$...SECRET WORD
1060  REM  LF....GOOD TRY FLAG
1099  REM
1100  REM  INITIALIZE
1101  REM
1105  DIM WD$(20),WE$(20)
1999  REM
2000  REM  MAIN PROGRAM
2001  REM
2005  HOME
2010  GOSUB 10000
2015  GOSUB 3000
2020  GOSUB 4000
2025  HOME
2030  GOSUB 10000
2035  GOSUB 5000
2040  GOSUB 5500
2045  GOSUB 6000
2050  GOSUB 7500
2055  FOR I = 1 TO 13: PRINT : NEXT
     I
2060  GOSUB 9000
2065  GOTO 2035
2070  END
2999  REM
3000  REM  INPUT 1: LEVEL OF DIFF
     ICULTY
3001  REM
3010  PRINT "LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY
     :"
3015  PRINT "<1 TO 4>"
3020  INPUT "";DF
3025  IF DF < 1 OR DF > 4 THEN : GOTO
     3000
3030  ON DF GOTO 3035,3045,3055,3
     065
3035 PT = 22
3040  RETURN
3045 PT = 18
3050  RETURN
3055 PT = 14
3060  RETURN
3065 PT = 12
3070  RETURN
3999  REM
4000  REM  INPUT 2: WORD
4001  REM
4002  REM  VARIABLES
4005 L = 1
4010 WR$ = ""
4015  REM  GET WORD
4020  HOME
4025  GOSUB 10000
4030  PRINT "ENTER 0 TO END"
4035  PRINT "WORD : ": GET WD$
4040  IF WD$ = "0" THEN 4070
4045 WD$(L) = WD$
4050 L = L + 1
4055  GOTO 4020
4060  REM  CONSTRUCT WORD WR$ +
4065  REM  INITIALIZE RESULT
4070  FOR I = 1 TO L - 1
4075 WR$ = WR$ + WD$(I)
4080 WE$(I) = "."
4085  NEXT I
4090  REM  CHECK WORD OPTION
4095  HOME
4100  GOSUB 10000
4105  PRINT "CHECK WORD ?"
4110  INPUT "<Y OR N> : ";IP$
4115  IF IP$ = "Y" THEN 4130
4120  RETURN
4125  PRINT
4130  PRINT "PRESS <RETURN> TO CO
     NTINUE"
4135  PRINT "WHEN VICTIM IS NOT L
     OOKING"
4140  INPUT "";IP$
4145  PRINT "WORD : ";WR$
4150  PRINT
4155  PRINT "PRESS <RETURN> TO CO
     NTINUE"
4160  PRINT "PRESS <ANY KEY> TO R
     ESTART"
4165  INPUT "";IP$
4170  IF IP$ = "" THEN : RETURN
4175  REM  SOFT CRASH TO RESTART
4180  POP
4185  GOTO 2000
4999  REM
5000  REM  INPUT 3: TRY
5001  REM
5010  INPUT "GUESS : ";IP$
5015 TR = TR + 1
5020  RETURN
5499  REM
5500  REM  GUESS WORD CHECKER
5501  REM
5505  IF IP$ = WR$ THEN :WE$ = IP
     $: POP : GOSUB 9000
5510  RETURN
5999  REM
6000  REM  GUESS LETTER CHECKER
6001  REM
6005  FOR I = 1 TO L
6010  IF IP$ = WD$(I) THEN WE$(I)
      = IP$:LF = 1: GOTO 6020
6015  IF WD$(I) <  > "£" THEN : GOTO
     6020
6020  NEXT I
6025  RETURN
7499  REM
7500  REM  GUESS WIN CHECKER
7501  REM
7505 WE$ = ""
7510  FOR I = 1 TO L
7515 WE$ = WE$ + WE$(I)
7520  NEXT I
7525  IF WE$ = WR$ THEN : POP : GOSUB
     9000
7530  RETURN
7999  REM
8000  REM  INCREMENT LOSS
8001  REM
8005 PT = PT - 1
8010  IF PT = 1 THEN : POP : GOSUB
     9000
8015  RETURN
8999  REM
9000  REM  DISPLAY
9001  REM
9005  GOSUB 10000
9010  IF WE$ = WR$ THEN 9025: REM
      WINNING WORD
9015  IF PT = 1 THEN 9160: REM  L
     OST LAST GUESS
9020  IF IP$ <  > WR$ THEN 9060: REM
      LOST GUESS GOTO NEXT
9025  REM  WINNER
9030  TEXT : HOME
9035  FLASH : PRINT "CONGRATULATI
     ONS": NORMAL
9040  PRINT : PRINT "WORD : ";WR$

9045  PRINT : PRINT "GUESS :";WE$
9050  PRINT : PRINT "TRIALS : ";T
     R
9055  END
9060  REM  BIDDER
9065  IF LF = 1 THEN :LF = 0: GOTO
     9140
9070  GOSUB 8000
9075  HGR : HCOLOR= 7
9080  REM  ADD NEXT PART TO DRAWI
     NG
9085  REM  ON RELEVANT DIFFICULTY

9090  ON DF GOTO 9095,9105,9115,9
     125
9095  ON PT GOSUB 11005,11010,110
     15,11020,11025,11030,11035,1
     1040,11045,11050,11055,11060
     ,11065,11070,11075,11080,110
     85,11090,11095,11100,11105
9100  GOTO 9140
9105  ON PT GOSUB 11005,11010,110
     20,11025,11035,11040,11050,1
     1055,11065,11070,11075,11080
     ,11085,11090,11095,11100,111
     05
9110  GOTO 9140
9115  ON PT GOSUB 11005,11020,110
     35,11050,11065,11070,11075,1
     1080,11085,11090,11095,11100
     ,11105
9120  GOTO 9140
9125  ON PT GOSUB 11005,11020,110
     35,11050,11065,11070,11075,1
     1080,11085,11090,11105
9130  GOTO 9140
9135  END
9140  PRINT "TRIALS : ";TR
9145  PRINT "WORD   : ";WE$
9150  RETURN
9155  RETURN
9160  REM  LOSER
9165  TEXT : HOME
9170  FLASH
9175  PRINT "COMMISERATIONS"
9180  NORMAL
9185  PRINT : PRINT "YOU'RE DEAD"

9190  PRINT : PRINT "WORD : ";WR$

9195  PRINT : PRINT "YOUR BEST :
     ";WE$
9200  END
9999  REM
10000  REM  SUBR: TITLE
10001  REM
10005  PRINT "HANGMAN"
10010  PRINT "*******"
10015  PRINT
10020  RETURN
10099  REM
11000  REM  DISPLAY SUBRS
11001  REM
11005  HPLOT 167,70 TO 173,70
11010  HPLOT 167,62 TO 167,70
11015  HPLOT 159,54 TO 167,62
11020  HPLOT 151,70 TO 145,70
11025  HPLOT 151,62 TO 151,70
11030  HPLOT 159,54 TO 151,62
11035  HPLOT 167,46 TO 171,46
11040  HPLOT 167,38 TO 167,46
11045  HPLOT 159,30 TO 167,38
11050  HPLOT 151,46 TO 147,46
11055  HPLOT 151,38 TO 151,46
11060  HPLOT 159,30 TO 151,38
11065  HPLOT 159,30 TO 159,54
11070  HPLOT 159,22 TO 163,26 TO
     159,30 TO 155,25 TO 159,22
11075  HPLOT 159,10 TO 159,22
11080  HPLOT 121,26 TO 137,10
11085  HPLOT 121,10 TO 159,10
11090  HPLOT 113,82 TO 121,74
11095  HPLOT 129,82 TO 121,74
11100  HPLOT 121,82 TO 121,10
11105  HPLOT 109,82 TO 133,82
11110  RETURN
```



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197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220
221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244
245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268
269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292
293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316
317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340
341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364
365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388
389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412
413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436

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2

HAND THIS CARD TO YOUR NEWSAGENT

by John Wellsman

Calendar alarm clock

```
66 CLS
70 GOSUB120:LOCATE3,1,0:PRINTDY$
80 LOCATE6,2,0:PRINTTIME$
91 I$=INKEY$:IF I$="" GOTO 92 ELSE 1000
92 IF H$<>""THEN 1020
100 GOTO 80
120 '
130 D$=DATE$:D1$=LEFT$(D$,2)
140 MM$="JANFEBMARAPRMAYJNEJLYAUGSEPOCT
NOVDEC"
150 M$=MID$(MM$,(VAL(D1$)-1)*3+1,3)
160 DA$=MID$(D$,4,2)
170 Y$=RIGHT$(D$,2)
180 DD$=STR$(VAL(DA$))+" "+M$+" "+Y$
190 DY$="SUNMONTUEWEDTHUFRISAT"
200 DY$=MID$(DY$,(DAY-1)*3+1,3)
210 DY$=DY$+" "+DD$:RETURN
1000 CLS
1009 PRINT"Time to be set"
1010 LOCATE5,1,0:PRINT"HHMM":LOCATE3,2,
0:INPUTA$
1015 H$=LEFT$(A$,2):M1$=RIGHT$(A$,2):CL
S
1020 IFLEFT$(TIME$,2)=H$ AND MID$(TIME$
,4,2)=M1$ THEN 1030 ELSE 70
1030 CLS: FOR X=1 TO 11
1040 LOCATE 6,2:PRINT"TIME'S UP"
1050 SOUND3+X,7
1055 IF INKEY$<>"" THEN H$="":M1$="":CL
S:GOTO 70
1060 NEXT:GOTO 1030
```

IF YOU TAKE your cue from Epson's advertising and keep an HX-20 by your bedside you may like to have a look at this little alarm-clock program. To set the alarm, press the space bar and enter the time that you want the alarm to go off. To stop the alarm once it has gone off, press the space bar again. Make sure that your Day value is set correctly.

Print Using

Some people have had difficulties with combining Print Using and Tabs. If you program:

```
10 PRINT TAB (10) USING U$;A
```

you will get a syntax error. The solution is to use the following syntax:

```
10 PRINT tab(10)"";:PRINTUSINGU$;A:
```

This holds good for LPrint as well. On page 181 I have described how string and numerical Print Using formats can be combined on Tandy machines. The same technique works equally well on the HX-20.

Memory structure

Some exploring in RAM will show how the program areas are organised. Memset is the starting address for the program area. Before any programs are entered it is divided into five blocks of 14 bytes each, as can easily be seen tying in the following without using any program lines:

```
FOR X = 2624 TO
2693:LPRINTX,PEEK(X):NEXT
```

and pressing Enter. You will then see the five blocks of program areas in their unused condition.

The first two addresses of each block contain the number of bytes used by the program in that area. The Epson version of Microsoft Basic has the MSB in the first address and the LSB is the second. In an empty area the MSB is zero and the LSB is 14, indicating that an area containing no program still occupies 14 bytes. You should remember that when you check the memory size of a program with State these 14 bytes are not included in the size of the program.

The next eight addresses of the area block are occupied by the value 32, the ASCII value for a space, followed by two addresses containing zero. The contents of the first 12 addresses of each program area are always the same. The last two addresses of each program area always contain zero, a value equal to the program area. As can be seen if you have used the little routine above, this pattern of 14 bytes is repeated another four times.

Coded programs

To see how the programs themselves are organised, first Login 1, and enter the following program.

```
10 FORX = 1TO10
20 PRINTX
30 NEXT
```

Type it in exactly like this without any spaces, then type Stat, which should show a figure of 25 bytes for the program. Any program in number 1 program area will start at 2624. Stat gives 25 bytes for the program, but 14 bytes must be added which Stat does not include, making a total of 39 bytes. The program will therefore end at address 2662.

Now Login 5 so that the program in area 1 is not affected. Enter this program:

```
10 FOR X = 2624 TO 2662
20 LPRINTX,PEEK(X):
30 NEXT
```

and run it. Once again the first two bytes show the size of the program and, as expected, the size or length is given as 39. Then follow the eight 32s and two zeros. Next are two addresses containing the values 10 and 88, the MSB and LSB of the address of the start of the next program line.

The next two addresses contain the MSB and LSB of the line number and it is fairly easy to see that this is 10. The following seven addresses contain the actual program code, and the last address in the line is always a 0. The next address after the zero is 2648, as indicated above, and this address and the next contain the MSB and LSB of the start of the next program line. The next two addresses contain the line number; then follows the code and the line-terminating zero, and so on through the program. It appears to terminate with three zeros, though the first zero is the terminating zero of the last line.

Every line requires at least five bytes of memory: two for the address of the start of the next line, two for the line number and one for the terminating zero. Thus, a 50-line program will need 250 bytes of memory before it is even written. So get as many commands as possible into each line.

The way in which the computer records in memory the program that has been written in Basic is by using what are known as tokens to represent the various commands and functions. Every command and function is translated into and recorded as either one or two ASCII codes. When the function or command requires two ASCII codes, and the first code is always 255.

Looking at your printout, starting at address 2640, the value in this address is 129. This is the code representing For, the first word of your program. The next address is 88, which is ASCII code for X. The next value is 234, the code for =. It is not the ASCII code for the character =, which is 01, but the token code for the function for assignment or equality.

The next code, 4a, is ASCII code for 1; 208 is the token for To, and is followed by the two ASCII codes for one and zero, and finally the zero signifying the end of the line. The next piece of program code starts at address 2652 and is very short, consisting of 162, the token for Print, and 88, the ASCIi code for X.

None of the commands used in the specimen program used the double-coded tokens. If you decide to decode all the functions and commands, remember that when you come across the value 255, it must be taken in conjunction with the following value to give the token. These are mostly the functions like Sin, Cos, Left$, Asc, and so on. There are only two tokens which include the first or opening bracket: "Tab(" and "Spc(".

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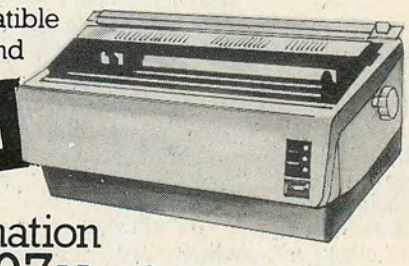

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System tape copier

AT ONE of the computer get-togethers that I go to, a friend passed on a security tip for concealing data files. The method could apply to tape or disc, sequential or direct-access files.

The idea is that the first field contains a number or a name. Before the business part of the file is read, the first field is Input and the operator has to enter the matching number or name. The computer compares the two, and the program will not proceed unless they match.

This is, of course, a very simple trick and though it would completely stop the game-player user who only knows how to switch on and Run, any competent programmer could get through it in a moment. It is almost impossible to make an absolutely secure lock for microcomputers. Even the famous dongle can be unscrewed if you really know your stuff.

Mr Anderton of Mawdesley, Lancashire has sent me a useful system tape copier. As well as copying the progam on the computer it will find start and end addresses. When the program is run, you have four options;

Specify the number of bytes to be read, the default is 1,000;
Load from tape;
Record on tape;
Lineprint the bytes.

The first option avoids loading garbage at the end of the program. As it stands, the program can load up to 12,287 bytes. The Load option loads each byte from the start into RAM, starting at 5000hex. The Lineprint option prints bytes from RAM, starting at any specified point. When loading or recording, the stream of bytes can be seen in the top right of the screen.

As you take in and LPrint the first dozen bytes of a system tape, you will find the first starter byte to be 55. The next six bytes are the title in ASCII code. Byte 9 is the LSB of a count of the number of bytes in the program. Byte 10 is the first of the Z-80 machine code.

Right at the end of the machine code are four ending bytes, the last two being the address of the start point of the program, which is jumped to when you press or Enter after system loading. If both have the value zero then the program has not been made to stand alone.

Copier — main program lines.

Line 200 sets printer to a line length to suit and sets default value L, in bytes.
Lines 210 to 240 Poke two small machine-code routines into RAM.
Lines 270 to 300 display the main menu.
Lines 310 intakes your L value.
Lines 400 to 410 load from tape.
Lines 520 and 530 CSave.
Lines 600 to 660 Line Print.

Mixing text and numbers.

```
1  CLS
10 U$="###"T$="%      % '9
   SPACES
20 A=RND(200): B$="ODD":
C$="EVEN"
30 IF A/2<>INT(A/2) TEN C$=B$
40 U$=T$+U$
50 PRINT USING U$;C$;A
60 C=C+1: if C>15 THEN END
70 GOTO 10
```

If the tape being copied was recorded on a blank tape, and if you over-estimate its length so as to be sure the program will not stop too soon, then, when the bytes stop coming the program will continue to wait forever for more. Press Break and Run. RAM will have the load, and you can set the number of bytes again and LPrint or record.

Mixing text and numbers

For anyone writing programs that produce reports involving tables of figures, one of the most useful features of Tandy Basic, and of all Microsoft Basics, is the Print Using command. The Apple does not have it, and even the mighty BBC Micro has only a pallid imitation.

Although it is briefly alluded to in the Level II manual, many users do not seem to realise that text can be included in the Print Using string both before and after the signs. For instance, if your are printing percentages then

U$="####%"

will include a % after each value when PrintUsingU$;X is used.

Another little-known feature of this command is that the numeric and text string versions can be linked together as illustrated by the accompanying simple eight-line routine.

It is possible to have a Print Using format combining both text and numeric formats, and using them in one command.

System tape copier.

```
130'THIS PROGRAM LOADS ANY TAPE  BYTE BY
    BYTE STRATING AT A
140'CSHINE  STARTER  INTO RAM STRTING AT
    5000H
150'ANOTHER TAPE CAN  THEN  BE  RECORDED
    FROM RAM.
160'THIS  PROGRAM  MUST BE LOADED AT 500
    BAUDS TO SUITE THE TAPES
170'TO BE COPIED.
180'PUT 20000 IN THE MEMORY PROMPT
200 POKE 16427,76:L=1000
210 DATA205,127,10,217,33,0,80,54,0,17,
    1,80.1.255,47,237,176,217,235
220 DATA33,0,80.205,150,2,205,53,2,50,
    60,60,119,35,27,175,186,32,243,187,
    32,240,205, 248,1,201
230 DATA 205,127,10,235,33,0,80,205,135,
    2,126,205,100,2,50,60,60,35,27,175,186,
    32,243,187,32,240,205,248,1,201
240 FOR I = 2000 TO 20077: READ A: POKE
    I,A:NEXT
270 CLS: PRINT "1 TO SET NO. OF BYTES."
280 PRINT"2  TO  LOAD FROM TAPE.": PRINT
    "3 TO RECORD ON TAPE.": PRINT "4 TO LINE
PRINT":INPUTI
290 ON I GOTO 310,400,520,600
300 GOTO 280
310 CLS: INPUT"HOW MANY  BYTES (NOT MORE
    THAN 12287)..";L: GOTO 280
400 POKE 16526,35:POKE 16527,78:X=USR(L)
410 CLS:INPUT"****  LOADED ****";I:GOTO
    270
520 POKE 16256,80:POKE  16257,78:  X  =
    USR(L)
530 CLS:INPUT"**** CASS SAVED ****";I:
600 B=0:PRINT"JUST <ENTER> TO LINEPRINT
    FROM BEGINNING"
610 INPUT"OR  SKIP  THE  FIRST  HOW MANY
    BYTES (DECIMAL)...";B
620 FOR  I  =  20480+B  TO  20480+L:
    N=PEEK(I): NM=FIX(N/16): NL=N=NM*16
630 IF NM> 9 THEN NM = NM +7
640 IF NL > 9 THEN NL = NL + 7
650 N$=CHR$(NM+48)+CHR$(NL+48)+" "
660 LPRINT  N$:NEXT:  LPRINT  CHR$(10):
    GOTO 270
```

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Oric Othello

OTHELLO IS played on an eight-by-eight board between the computer and its human opponent. Each player has two pieces in the centre of the board at the beginning of the game. Human and computer take turns to place a new piece in one of the vacant squares in such a way as to capture one or more of the opponent's pieces.

Pieces are captured if they lie on a vertical, diagonal or horizontal line terminated at one end by the piece just placed on the board and at the other by another piece belonging to the player. Captured pieces change to the colour of the player who has captured them.

Every move must capture at least one piece. Where no piece can be captured the player misses a turn and the opponent makes another move. The game ends when all 64 squares of the board have been filled, or when neither player can move. The player with most pieces at the end of the game is the winner.

The Othello program has been written by Gary Nugent of Dublin for a 48K Oric. The player plays the computer, and has the option of being black or white. Black always plays first. The computer is a little slow in choosing its moves, but it does provide a challenging game.

The board is displayed and updated after each move has been made. There is no need to press Return after entering each move. To forfeit your move press P. The computer will then make its move, if it is able.

The squares on the board are accessed by a co-ordinate system of input. The columns are lettered from A to H, and the rows numbered from 1 to 8. The row is entered first, followed by the column number. For example: 4C.

Lines 1 to 280 initialise the variables and are only executed at the start of each game. The board is held in the A%( ) and the B%( ) arrays. If the value in the A%( ) array does not match the corresponding value in the B%( ) array then the computer produces a Zap or a Shoot sound, depending on which player is moving. N%( ) holds the eight possible directions of movement from any of the squares on the board.

Lines 300 to 420 form a subroutine which returns a value S of placing a new piece at the square A%(PSN). If F = 1 then the state of the captured pieces is changed.

Lines 500 to 570 display the board and produce the sound effects for captured pieces whose state is being changed. Lines 600 to 670 calculate the best position for the computer to place its piece. If two positions are equally good then one of them is chosen at random.

Lines 700 to 740 display the computer's choice. Lines 800 to 910 accept the human player's move, check that it is valid and display the result. Lines 1000 to 1110 display the result of the game.

```
1 REM ** OTHELLO **
2 PRINT CHR$(17)CHR$(20):CLS:PAPER 0:FOR I=1 TO 5:PRINT:NEXT I
3 DOKE #BC70,535:DOKE #BC98,535
4 PRINT SPC(14)CHR$(27)CHR$(4)"JOTHELLO"CHR$(4)
5 PLOT 11,14,CHR$(3)+CHR$(17)+CHR$(96)+" Gary Nugent "+CHR$(16)
6 PLOT 12,17,CHR$(7)+CHR$(20)+" May  1983  "+CHR$(16)
7 WAIT 300
10 DATA @,28,62,62,62,62,62,28,0
20 DATA \,0,0,0,0,63,0,0,0
30 DATA 11,10,9,1,-1,-9,-10,-11
40 X$="  A B C D E F G H "
50 Y$="  1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 "
60 Z$="                    "'* 19 spaces *
100 FOR I=1 TO 2:READ CH$
110 FOR J=0 TO 7:READ D:POKE 46080+8*ASC(CH$)+J,D:NEXT J,I
120 LORES 0:INK4
130 FOR I=0 TO 19:PLOT 10,I,23:PLOT 11,I,Z$:NEXT I
140 FOR I=1 TO 18
150 PLOT 10+I,1,ASC(MID$(X$,I,1))+128:PLOT 11,I,ASC(MID$(Y$,I,1))+128
160 NEXT I
170 FOR I=1 TO 9:FOR J=1 TO 15
180 PLOT 10+2*I,2+J,"!":IF INT(J/2)*2<>J THEN PLOT 12+J,2*I,"\"
190 NEXT J,I
200 DIM A%(99),N%(7),B%(99)
210 FOR I=0 TO 7:READ N%(I):NEXT I
220 CMPTR=-1:HUMAN=1
230 A%(44)=CMPTR:A%(45)=HUMAN:A%(54)=HUMAN:A%(55)=CMPTR
240 GOSUB 500:PLOT 8,24,"What do you want:"
250 PLOT 8,25,"Black (B) or White (W) ?":PLOT 11,26,"Black plays first."
260 GET A$:IF A$<>"b" AND A$<>"w" GOTO 260
270 PLOT 8,24,Z$+"      ":PLOT 8,25,Z$+"      ":PLOT 11,26,Z$
280 IF A$="b" THEN 800 ELSE CMPTR=1:HUMAN=-1:GOTO 600
300 S=0
310 IF A%(PSN)<>0 THEN 420
320 FOR I=0 TO 7
330 Q=PSN:L=1:Z=N%(I)
340 Q=Q+Z
350 IF A%(Q)=0 THEN 410
360 IF A%(Q)=T THEN 380
```

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

```
370 L=L+1:GOTO 340
380 S=S+L-1:IF F=0 THEN 410
390 FOR K=1 TO L:A%(PSN+K*N%(I))=T:NEXT K
400 A%(PSN)=T
410 NEXT I
420 RETURN
500 HS=0:CS=0
510 FOR R=1 TO 8:FOR C=1 TO 8
520 X=A%(R+10*C):Y=B%(R+10*C)
525 IF CMPTR=1 AND HUMAN=-1 THEN TEMP=HS:HS=CS:CS=TEMP
530 IF X=-1 THEN PLOT 11+2*C,2*R+1,"O":CS=CS+1:IF X<>Y THEN ZAP
540 IF X=1 THEN PLOT 11+2*C,2*R+1,"@":HS=HS+1:IF X<>Y THEN SHOOT:WAIT 9
542 IF CMPTR=1 AND HUMAN=-1 THEN TEMP=HS:HS=CS:CS=TEMP
545 B%(R+10*C)=X
550 NEXT C,R
553 HS$=RIGHT$(STR$(HS),LEN(STR$(HS))-1)
556 CS$=RIGHT$(STR$(CS),LEN(STR$(CS))-1)
560 PLOT 7,21,CHR$(23)+"You have: "+HS$+", I have: "+CS$+". "+CHR$(16)
570 RETURN
600 M=0:F=0:T=CMPTR:PLOT 14,23,CHR$(12)+"Thinking..."
610 FOR R=1 TO 8:FOR C=1 TO 8
620 PSN=R+10*C:GOSUB 300
630 IF S<M OR S+INT(RND(1)*2)=M THEN 650
640 M=S:X=PSN
650 NEXT C,R
660 IF M=0 THEN 720
670 F=1:PSN=X:GOSUB 300
700 R=INT(X/10):C=X-10*R
710 PLOT 13,23,"I chose: "+CHR$(C+48)+CHR$(R+64)+CHR$(0)
715 FOR I=1 TO 30:PLOT 11+2*R,2*C+1," ":PLOT 11+2*R,2*C+1,"+":NEXT I
720 IF M=0 THEN PLOT 9,23,"I couldn't move.":GOTO 740
730 GOSUB 500
740 IF (A$="p" AND M=0) OR (CS+HS=64) THEN 1000
800 PLOT 7,23,CHR$(2)+"Your move (e.g. 2G):   "+CHR$(0)
810 GET A$:IF A$="p" THEN 900
820 R=ASC(A$)-48:IF R<1 OR R>8 THEN 810
830 PLOT 29,23,A$
840 GET A$:C=ASC(A$)-96:IF C<1 OR C>8 THEN 840
850 PLOT 30,23,ASC(A$)-32
860 PSN=R+10*C
865 T=HUMAN:F=0:GOSUB 300
870 IF S=0 THEN PLOT 12,25,CHR$(18)+CHR$(7)+"ILLEGAL MOVE  "+CHR$(16)
880 IF S=0 THEN WAIT 200:PLOT 12,25,LEFT$(Z$,16):PLOT 29,23,"  ":GOTO 810
885 FOR I=1 TO 30:PLOT 11+2*C,2*R+1," ":PLOT 11+2*C,2*R+1,"+":NEXT I
890 F=1:GOSUB 300
900 GOSUB 500:PLOT 8,23,Z$+"    ":IF CS+HS=64 THEN 1000
910 GOTO 600
1000 CLS:FOR I=1 TO 11:PRINT:NEXT I
1010 A$=CHR$(27)+CHR$(4)
1020 IF CS>HS THEN PRINT SPC(12);A$;"N I WON !!!"CHR$(4)
1030 IF HS>CS THEN PRINT SPC(9);A$;"N CONGRATULATIONS"CHR$(4)
1040 IF HS>CS THEN PRINT:PRINT SPC(11);A$;"N YOU WON !!!"CHR$(4)
1045 IF CS=HS THEN PRINT SPC(10);A$;"N - A DRAW -"CHR$(4)
1050 FOR I=1 TO 20
1060 INK INT(RND(1)*8):PAPER INT(RND(1)*8)
1070 NEXT I
1075 INK 0:PAPER 3
1080 WAIT 200:CLS:PLOT 12,12,"ANOTHER GAME ?"
1090 GET A$:IF A$<>"y" AND A$<>"n" THEN 1090
1100 IF A$="y" THEN CLS:RUN
1110 IF A$="n" THEN PRINT CHR$(20);CHR$(17):END
```

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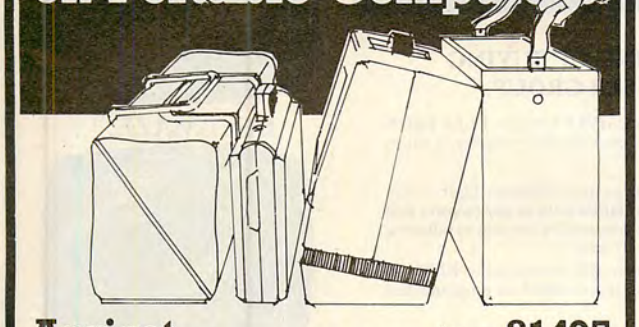

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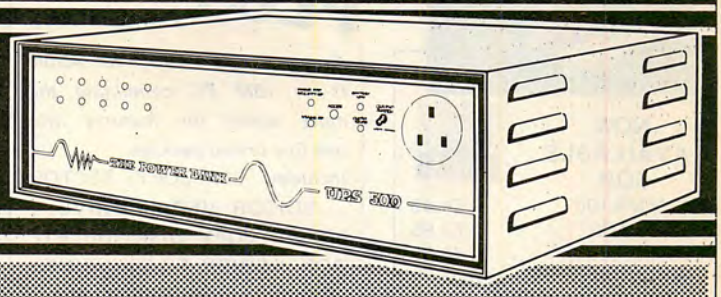

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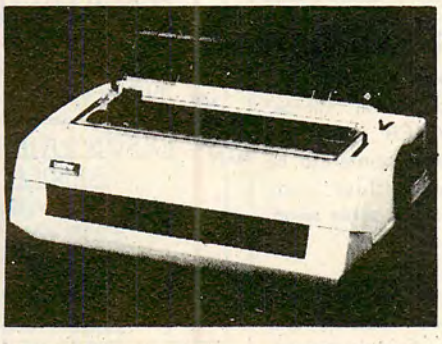

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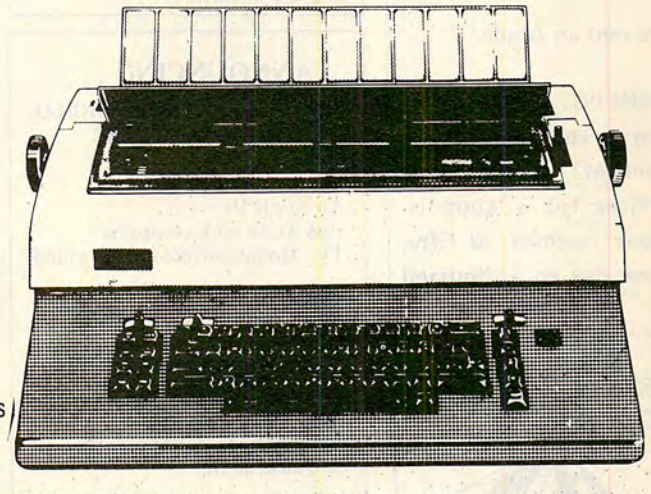

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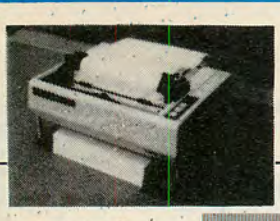

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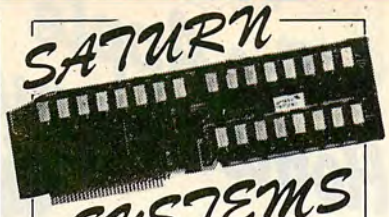

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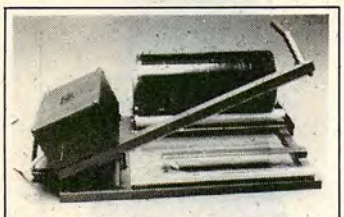

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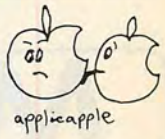

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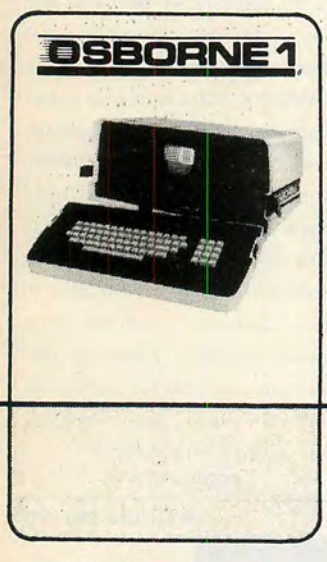

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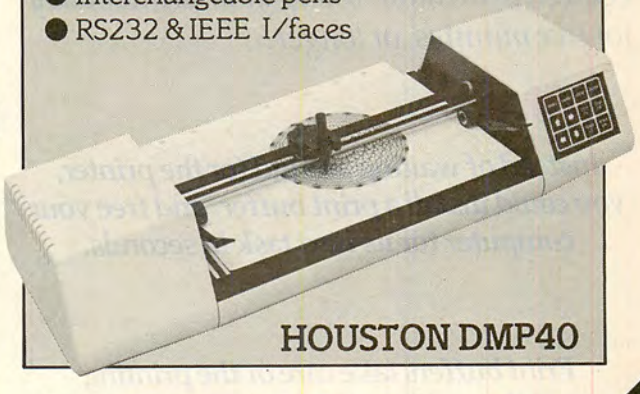

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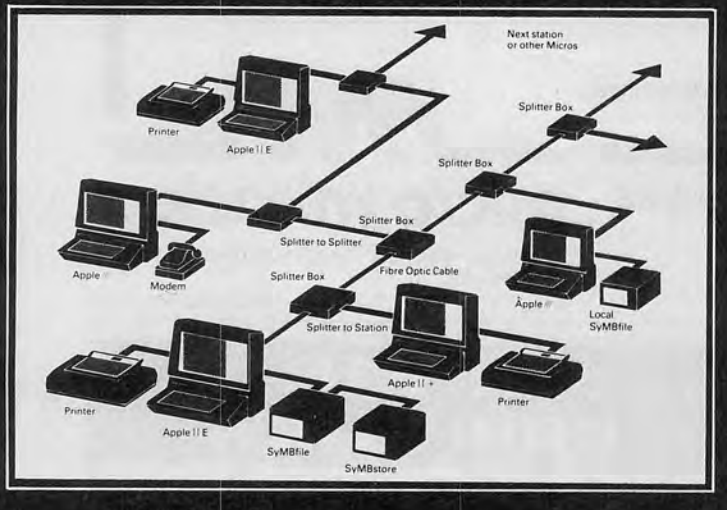

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The fun language

Christoper Roper reviews the first wave of Logo books.

FROM A STANDING START last year, there are now at least six books on programming in Logo and one more is due out by the end of this year. Sadly, they mostly cover the same ground: turtle graphics and a little list processing. The main justification for their almost simultaneous appearance is that every publisher wants a Logo programming book on their list.

The books are appearing now because Logo became widely available on microcomputers only in 1982, beginning with the TI-99/4 and the Apple II. There are now implementations for the Commodore 64, the Research Machines 380-Z, the Atari 400, 600 and 800, the IBM PC and soon for the Sinclair Spectrum.

The idea of Logo as a programming language for children was popularised by Seymour Papert, one of the architects of the language, in his book *Mindstorms: Children, Computers and Powerful Ideas*, which is still available from Harvester Press. It is quite different from the how-to Logo books under review, and should certainly be ready by anyone interested in the language.

The first reason for learning Logo or teaching it to your children is that it is very accessible and teaches the central concepts of computer programming. It provides the best possible entry point to computing for children or adults who are not talented mathematicians or spontaneously enthused by Basic or machine code. Logo is fun.

The second reason, which may attract readers of *Practical Computing*, is that Logo is a sane version of Lisp. It offers list processing with fewer parentheses and without Car, CDR and Lambda. Obviously, Logo on an Apple II cannot be compared to Lisp on a DEC 20, but it is certainly more powerful and more flexible than any of the cut-down Lisps I have seen offered on microcomputers.

Gary Kildall of Digital Research has launched an implementation of Logo for the IBM PC in the belief that Logo could be a useful applications programming language, appealing to the same market as the CP/M with which DR made its first fortune. Over the next two years, we will discover whether Logo is a general-purpose programming language or strictly an educational tool. IBM is launching its own Logo written by LCSI, the company which implemented Apple Logo.

No existing book addresses itself to the wider applications of Logo. They all concentrate on the language in a strictly educational environment, explore its intriguing graphic capabilities, and offer a brief introduction to list processing. Another book which is not strictly about Logo is *Learning and Teaching with Computers*, by Tim O'Shea and John Self. It offers a fairly grim critique of much that has been done with computers in the name of education, and suggests that Logo is one of the few positive avenues of development. O'Shea and Self also look at the question of artificial intelligence in education, and use Logo for publishing sample programs.

One warning — Logo, like Basic, is not a standard language. The first British Logo, implemented at Edinburgh University for the Research Machines 380-Z and 480-Z is quite different from most of the American versions, which derive directly or indirectly from MIT. The books so far published use the American syntax and vocabulary. The Sinclair Spectrum will also follow the American style.

Peter Ross is a lecturer in the Department of Artificial Intelligence at Edinburgh. There are styles and fashions in textbooks, and if you prefer a buttoned-down, economical approach without Californian backslapping then Ross's *Logo Programming* may well be the book for you. Some may find it too demanding and too mathematical, but I like the way he takes the reader a little way into a project and then leaves dozens of possible lines for developing and improving a program. Although he comes from Edinburgh, Ross uses the Terrapin Logo, written for the Apple II in all his examples. It is virtually the same as the version produced for the Commodore 64. Ross also provides appendices facilitating translation into other Logo dialects.

Apple Logo by Harold Abelson comes in two flavours: red for the Terrapin version and blue for the official Apple Logo. Otherwise the two books are identical. At £11.50 it seems disgracefully expensive for a spirally-bound book which must have sold by the tens of thousands in the United States. It is easier for the complete novice than Peter Ross's book, as it spends more time on the simple use of turtle graphics. But Abelson takes the reader through to quite advanced use of lists.

Whether you prefer Ross or Abelson is really a question of style. If I were looking for a textbook to use in school, I think Abelson would do for 11 to 14-year-olds whereas Ross would be better for O-level and A-level students. The Abelson book is much more clearly laid out than Ross's, and has an interesting section on the Dynaturtle, a concept popularised by Abelson and Andy DiSessa at MIT, which is not touched by Ross.

Learning Logo on the Apple II by Anne McDougall, Tony Adams and Pauline Adams is two or three steps down from Abelson and Ross in terms of intellectual rigour, though it covers roughly the same ground. There are more examples, more conventional exercises, and fewer open-ended projects. A teacher who is beginning to use Logo in the classroom — as opposed to a student who is learning Logo — might prefer this book, which is clearly based on the authors' teaching experiences in

(continued on next page)

The fun language

(continued from previous page)

Australia. It can easily be used with either of the Apple Logos as it sets variant procedures side by side.

Learning with Logo by Daniel Watt is one of your all-singing, all-dancing American textbooks, with funny little cartoon figures running about carrying numbers, and masses of bonhomie. Perhaps the educational psychologists have determined that it works, but if you were brought up on read/eat-it-because-it's-good-for-you lines then this one may stick in your craw. It recalled the post-war joke that there were only three things wrong with American soldiers: they were overpaid, overweight and over here. If you substitute "overpriced" for "overpaid" you have Daniel Watt's book.

I probably shouldn't be so nasty about it because it covers the ground quite adequately and is tailored for the American classroom. My worry is that some libraries in this country will feel they must buy all the Logo books, and find themselves spending over £100 before the end of the year.

David Thornburg has written a number of down-market Californian programming guides, and I was prepared for the worst from his *Discovering Apple Logo*. In fact, this book is much better than that and, by concentrating exclusively on graphics, he does break ground not covered by the others. In fact it fits rather neatly as a complement to Peter Ross's guide. Together, they probably make the best package to take a teacher or a student through from the very beginning to a fair standard of competence.

Logo, a Guide to Learning through Programming by Peter Goodyear is due from Ellis Horwood before the end of 1983. To judge only from advance publicity this book, too, will address the problems of the classroom teacher, and will take us through graphics and list processing.

I have found all the books a welcome supplement to the manuals which came with my own Apple Logo discs. However, there is a limit to what can be usefully written down about a language which has been deliberately made simple enough to be used by six-year-olds and whose philosophy demands that you learn by your own mistakes. I think we buy books believing that we will find some magic trick which will turn us into excellent programmers. There is no such magic trick. We just have to learn the language by using it. PC

Mindstorms: Children, Computers and Powerful Ideas by Seymour Papert. Published by Harvester Press, £8.95. ISBN 0 855 271 639.

Learning and Teaching with Computers by Tim O'Shea and John Self. Published by Harvester Press. ISBN 0 710 806 655.

Logo Programming by Peter Ross. Published by Addison Wesley, £9. ISBN 0 201 146 371.

Apple Logo by Harold Ableson. Published by Byte/McGraw-Hill, £11.50. ISBN 0 070 004 250.

Learning Logo on the Apple II by Anne McDougall, Tony Adams and Pauline Adams. Published by Prentice Hall, £11. ISBN 0 724 807 322.

Discovering Apple Logo by David Thornburg. Published by Addison Wesley, £14.50. ISBN 0 201 077 698.

Logo, A Guide to Learning through Programming by Peter Goodyear. To be published by Ellis Horwood.

Learning with Logo by Daniel Watt. Published by Byte/McGraw-Hill, £16.50. ISBN 0 070 685 703.

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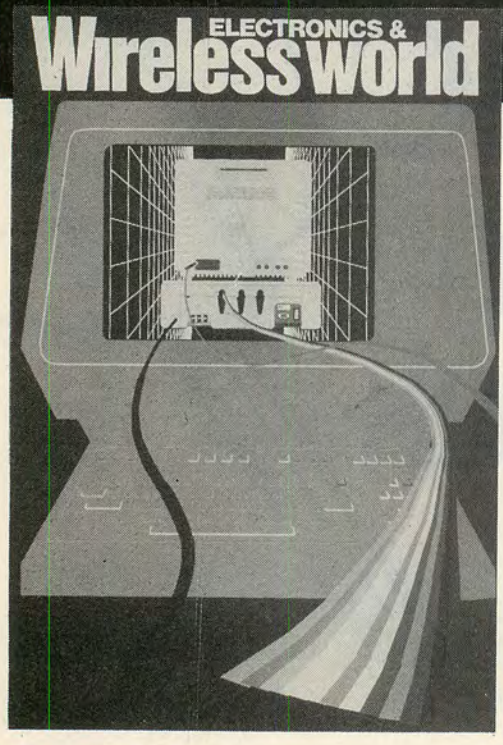

Another first from Wireless World.

This month's Wireless World won't be telling you what a micro does, instead we'll tell you how to choose the micro that's most relevant to your technical needs.

This is possibly the most detailed guide to microcomputer facilities yet to be offered in a monthly publication in the UK.

December's Wireless World lists the available micros, their characteristics and facilities for connecting peripherals.

This is a survey for engineers and experimenters, who need to know how individual computers can be used in their work–the emphasis is on the interfacing capabilities of the machines described.

We were the first with the inside stories of television and video, in the December issue we're first again.

Out now.

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While microcomputer magazines abound, very few are as well established or as highly regarded as PRACTICAL COMPUTING, now in its sixth year of publication. The magazine concentrates on the serious side of personal computing, providing authoritative reviews of micros (mainly in the £500 — £5,000 price bracket) and the most interesting new software.

Each issue contains a special section devoted to an important area of computing such as languages, databases or printers and plotter. In addition, there are regular features on practical applications, education and an Open File section to which readers contribute their own programs.

But there is no room for complacency in this fast-moving market! In order to keep PRACTICAL COMPUTING as one of the country's leading microcomputer magazines, we have made a number of improvements, with more to follow. These are:-

1. **More editorial pages**
2. **Increased circulation to 61,100 (ABC Jan-Jun 1983)**
3. **Computerised FREE Reader Enquiry Service**
4. **Increased staff levels to provide an even better service to advertisers and readers alike**
5. **Re-designed (from November) to make PRACTICAL COMPUTING more attractive and easier to read**
6. **Recent Reader Survey providing important details on our readership**

However, these improvements have been made against a background of rising costs which have forced us to increase our advertisement rates from the January 1984 issue. All our advertisers with an existing series booking in-house will be given rate protection.

These improvements will ensure that PRACTICAL COMPUTING continues to **lead** and will go on being the best value micro magazine on the market.

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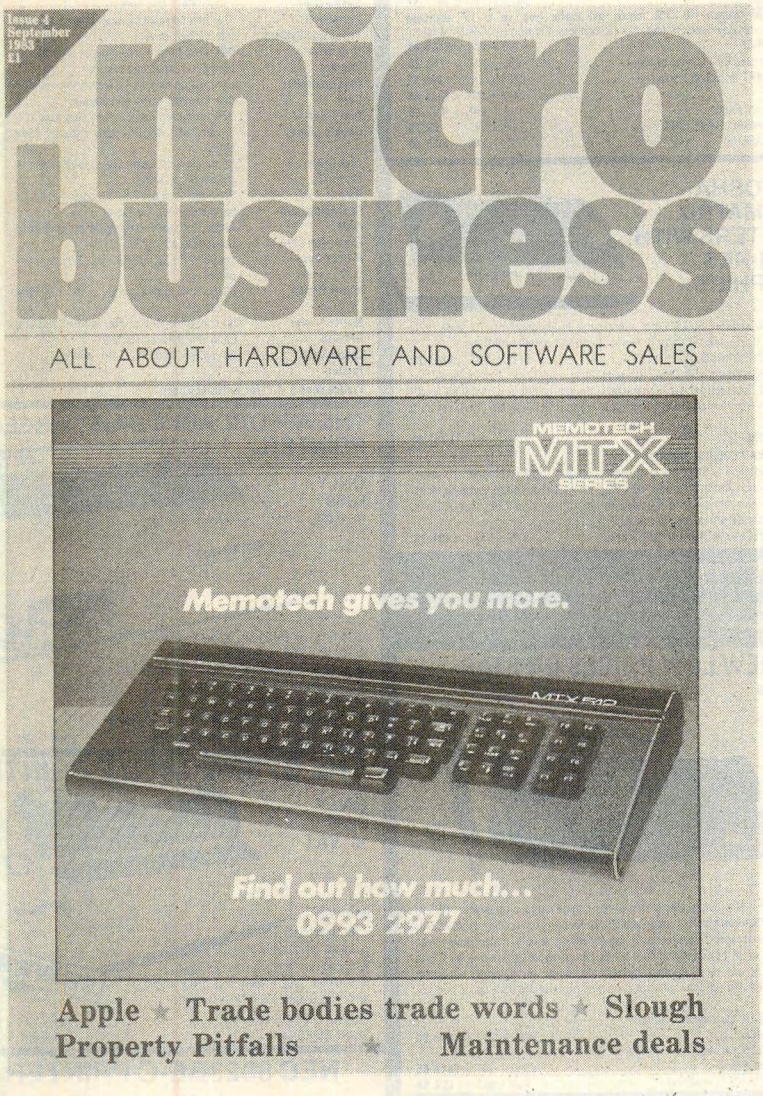
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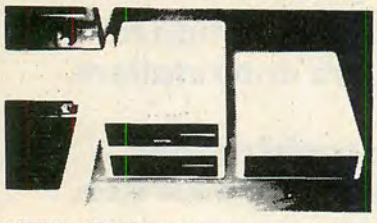

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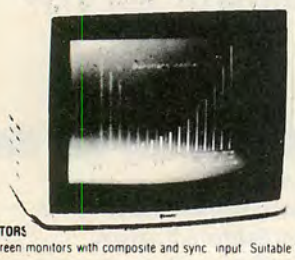

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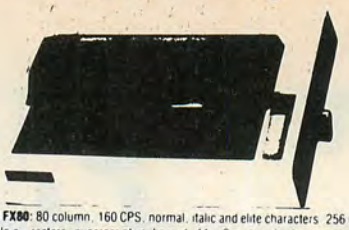

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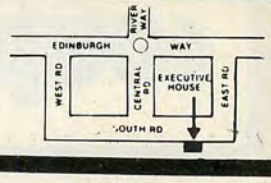

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>NEXT MONTH

>SPEED

Do benchmark timings mean anything? How can you speed up your Basic programs? Would it be better to buy an accelerator card or a hard disc? In the special section of the January issue we look at the whole question of speed, and how to get more of it.

>REVIEWS

New micros and new software packages are popping up every day, but we will be reporting on the most interesting offerings available, including the ACT Apricot. Chris Bidmead will be looking at Concurrent CP/M and MS-DOS v2 — this was, with apologies, held over last month — plus Lotus 123, the spreadsheet with graphs capability: 123 is currently the best selling business program in the States.
On the lighter side, we will be reviewing a selection of recent books for the BBC Micro, plus Oric games.

>AND MUCH MORE!

Other features in the January issue run the gamut from the potential of Shugart's new 1,000 Mbyte optical disc drive to using a micro as an aid to bra design. A special section of BBC games listings will provide something to type over the hols while the usual rubbish is on the TV. Plus there will be all the usual news of new micros and software, our regular columns and departments, plus pages and pages of free software in Open File.

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Class micro

Brian Boyde-Shaw offers a view of school computing in the age of computer literacy.

THE DAY begins with assembly. In troops the lower-school population in a two-dimensional array. The headmistress is on the dais and over her head is a large monitor screen which currently displays the continuous sequential file holding the timetables for the lower-school classes.

The proceedings start. Miss Sharp, the lower-school music teacher, sits at her BBC Model T and plays the school hymn. She still prefers the personal touch. At a nod from the headmistress, Mr Keen the chief audio-visual technician presses a couple of function keys and a flat Oxford accent delivers the day's notices.

That done, they march out to their classrooms, showing their plastic-card passes to the card-reading machine at the classroom door. Class registration is automated now, and school lunch, if required, has been ordered.

Watchful eye

Design and Technology is the first period of a crowded day. It starts as the students of class A$, sitting in pairs, study a preliminary design for a new turtle to be used in the primary school next door. In the corner the D and T master sits and scans his screen, flicking from console to console, keeping a watchful eye on his students' activities.

Maths is next. The software for simultaneous equations has been down-loaded straight from the Department of Education in London by a technician, and all is ready. They file in, handing in the screen dump of their latest homework attempt. It will be read later by Mr Trigg, the maths master, with the aid of a character scanner coupled to the school's admin computer. Some D and T students are working on an illicit interrupt program to ensure that their class has a 100 percent pass rate at the next readout.

Maths over, it is morning break time. Robbie Robot, as the kids call him, together with his team of robot helpers are touring the school corridors, dispensing non-fizzy, vitamin-fortified drinks and government-issued wholemeal biscuits. Playtime is no longer synonymous with body activities. There is no football, netball, chase or plain rowdiness now — except perhaps the occasional whoop of joy as the 1,000,000th space invader bites the dust in the many activity rooms scattered throughout the lower school. Unseen, the school security computer registers pupils' names, scores and reaction times into its data bank for a use that even the main school head does not care to think about.

Period 3, from a seven-period day, sees the class in the art rooom. No easels, brushes or messy paints are to be seen, but 30-odd colour monitors stare remorselessly towards the centre of the room, awaiting switch-on. Free expression is on today's menu. Picasso would have been in his element.

As usual Miss Drew, the art teacher, sits at her master console overviewing the proceedings, adding as required — or, more often, as is not required — a spot of guidance via her remote-control light-pen. When the bell sounds all screen pictures are automatically downloaded to the Arttech arts master computer. Those it judges to be the best are sent on to the Department of Education for banking. Art is on the decline natonally, and the goverment wants to step up interest, so the Minister for Arts is gathering information.

Last lesson of the morning is history, and the early 20th century is the period under investigation. The history room is double screened at each work point. Above the VDU is a colour TV, ready to be used at a touch of a function key on the computer below. Sets of earphones are plugged into each set as the lesson has sound as well as full colour.

After 10 minutes viewing, the pupils create their own interpretation of the events they have just seen, using block and high-resolution graphics on the VDU. The history master, nearing retirement, longs for the good old days: 30 kids standing around a single computer borrowed for half an hour from the maths department, doing multi-choice questions.

Lunch time

Plastic plates, plastic cutlery and plastic food in clear plastic dispensers — lunch time has not changed much, despite the pill prophets. It is eaten in its usual disorderly orderly fashion: no meal tickets to hand in, no smiling or grumbling dinner ladies in sight, not even any jokes at the teacher's expense.

The activity rooms fill up. Zaps, groans, whistles and explosions abound. In a corner, two bespectacled youngsters are playing three-dimensional chess. In the centre of the room three turtles are lumbering at level 1 down the centre of the room, following a painted track as an impatient group of level sixers look on. Pictures of Seymour Papert and Margaret Thatcher have pride of place on an end wall.

A bust of Sir Clive Sinclair stands proudly above a glass-cased ZX-80. Hand-held games machines, complete with antennae, hold the attention of half of the room. Pete Lowe, a level sixer, has just had his latest game accepted by the Activity Branch of the Department for nationwide UHF downloading.

The bell sounds. All screens go blank, the turtles grind to a halt and the chess pieces refuse to move. Partly completed games are automatically stored for future use at an after-school activity session.

Melody

Lesson 5 is music in the 21st century. Mr Sharp, a recently qualified music teacher, encourages his charges to design their own futuristic compositions, using the latest BBC Model T with built-in synthesiser. At any hint of a melodious outpouring, Mr Sharp's keen ears direct him to the required function keys to download the attempt for posterity and later vetting. He probably read about the monkey theory when he was at college.

Physics is next. The lower school prides itself on being the first in the county to have a fully automated computer-controlled physics laboratory. All real and simulated experiments in the latest AEB syllabus, DES controlled, can be called up for on-screen video or real-time action. Last period of the day is sociology, and today's investigation is a favourite with class A$. The latest implementation of the Life program, with full sound and vision, fills the big screen in the hall.

The final bell sounds and the class disperses, after clocking their cards at the classroom door. Homework will be awaiting them at home, downloaded by the main lower-school activity computer.

Young Colin Sparkes races home. Yesterday, his 13th birthday, he got the latest add-on from Fuller — quadraphonic colour and sound for his ZX-Meson. But the TV system is on the blink and the repair man is held up.

Retreating to his room Colin frantically pulls open the door of his wardrobe. His hands scrabble about on the top shelf. He races down the stairs into the back garden and aims for the back fence. In the kitchen dialling in her latest menu, a neighbour hears the tinkle of thin glass. She looks through the window. Nestling neatly in the centre of the hydroponic bed of cucumbers, in the computer-controlled greenhouse, is a black-and-white striped football.

Brian Boyde-Shaw is at the Byte Microcomputing Centre, Avon.

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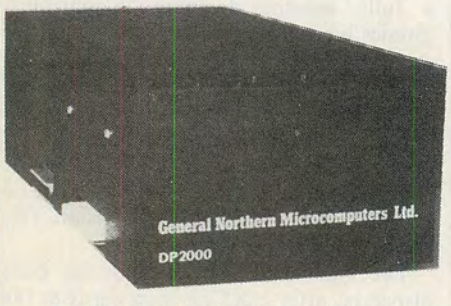

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Languages Included	Basic
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Keyboard Facilities	10 programmable keys
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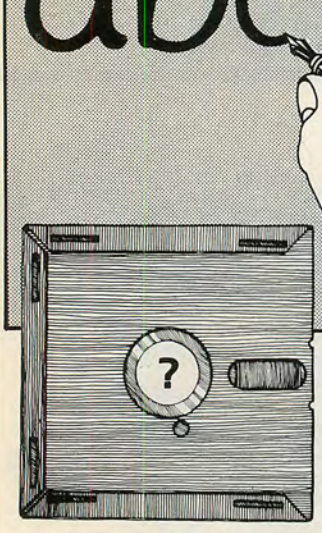

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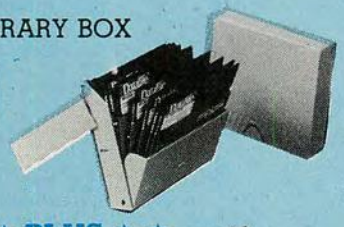

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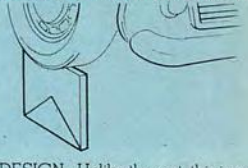

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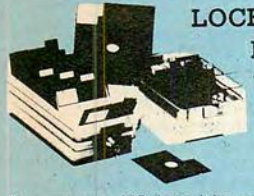

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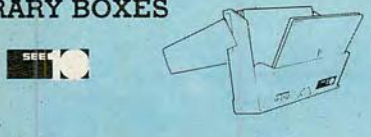

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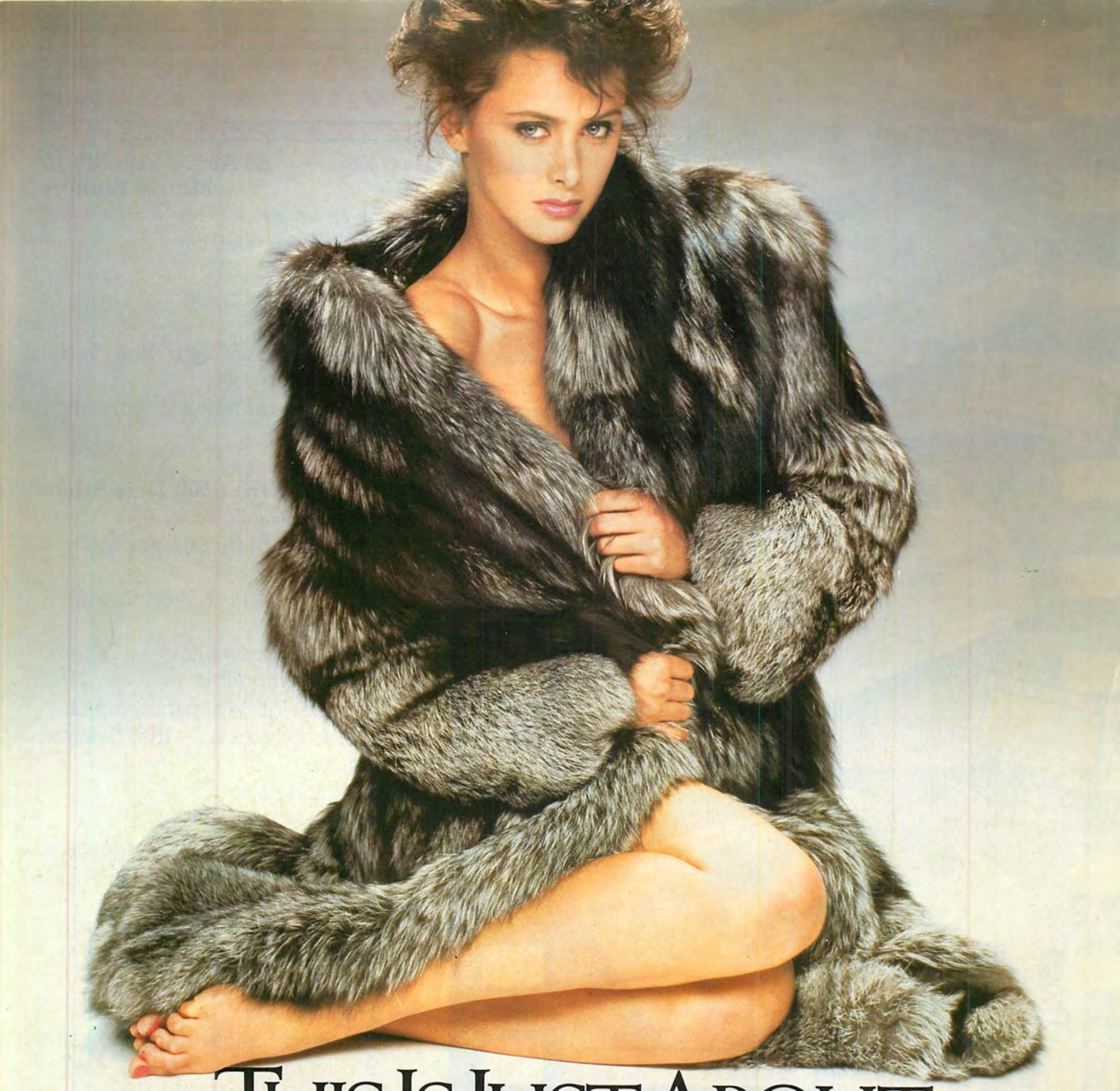

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